

THE CITY OF  
GREATER GEELONG

# BARWON HEADS VILLAGE PARK DRAFT MASTER PLAN

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FINAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2021

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of this land.

It also acknowledges all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Greater Geelong community today.

# Introduction

**In late 2019, we started a project to refresh the Barwon Heads Village Park Master Plan and provide a consolidated new vision for the reserve over the next 10 years.**

The existing plan was outdated and no longer reflected the needs and uses of the park by the changing community of Barwon Heads. Ageing facilities, changes in sporting and building guidelines balanced with the need to protect the park's significant environmental, cultural values and open space all highlighted the need for a new plan.

The planned project would involve an assessment of current conditions, issues and opportunities, stakeholder input and broad community consultation to develop the new plan for the park.

To oversee the project development, we also invited the local clubs and groups who use the space, as well as the Barwon Heads Association, to be part of a Project Reference Group.

## ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

The key aim of this engagement was to gain insight into community views about the draft plan, existing uses of the park and future needs. We also wanted to build community awareness of the project and strengthen relationships with, and between, all key stakeholder groups.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report summarises the community engagement process we used to seek feedback on the draft master plan and how that feedback has influenced the final plan.

This report consolidates the feedback received from the community through the engagement process, as well as feedback received from the Project Reference Group. The report also highlights how this feedback has been incorporated into the final plan.

The information contained in this report is intended to 'close the loop' with community members and stakeholders that contributed to the engagement process. It will also be used by councillors who will be endorsing the final master plan.



**Image 1: Aerial views of the Village Park in Barwon Heads.**



**Image 2: The 'Pirate Park' playground**

# How we engaged

The community engagement period was conducted over seven weeks, from May to mid-June in 2021.

Our core engagement was conducted via the Have Your Say online platform, which was supplemented by two face-to-face drop-in sessions when COVID-related restrictions allowed.

The engagement was promoted via our many channels, including our direct mailout, posters in the park, a media release and our Facebook page. A targeted post on Facebook created a reach of over 9500 and 250 actions.

In total, there were over 3000 views of the Have Your Say project page, which converted to 282 contributions. To encourage contributions, the platform offered a vision board, survey and submission form. This was also supported by phone and email contacts and two drop-in sessions.

Hard copy plans were also made available and feedback taken by phone.



162

Ideas and votes posted to the vision board



23

Online written submissions



91

Surveys completed



3,271

Have Your Say website views



1,229

Flyers delivered to residents



2

Print adverts in local newspapers



79

People who elected to follow the project



282

Number of contributions

## SOCIAL MEDIA



250

Actions (Clicks, reactions, shares, comments etc.)

9597

Reach/Impressions



10

Posters installed across the park



29

People attended 2 drop-in sessions held on



55

Contributions received at drop-in sessions

## Engagement details

### Have Your Say online platform

A project page was developed to share relevant information about the project and encourage community feedback. While the initial release of information occurred in late December 2020, the core engagement period was between 1 May 2021 and 18 June 2021.

A detailed hotspot map was prepared with information and images for all of the recommendations in the plan overlaid on the draft landscape plan.

### Visioner tool (online)

The visioner tool was originally intended to give community members a quick means to post a note about the vision and objectives for the park, but it ended up being used to provide feedback about all elements of the plan. Fifty individual responses were provided using this tool and 112 likes/dislikes were posted (total of 162 contributions).

### Survey (online and hardcopy)

A survey was developed (see Appendix A) and was designed to take 10–15 minutes to complete. Ninety-one surveys were completed both online and in hard copy.

The survey sought feedback on the vision and objectives, zoning, recommendations and any other issues community wanted to raise about future use and management of the park. 203 comments were generated in addition to the drop-down list selections which added a rich layer of community sentiment.

### Submission form

The submission form enabled people to provide more detailed, open-ended feedback on any aspect of the draft master plan, as well as add attachments. Twenty-three submissions were made with five attachments including those emailed directly.

### Email

A project specific email address was created enabling people to provide feedback. Nine people provided feedback about the plan in this way.

### Phone calls

The project manager's phone number was provided on all posters and flyers that went out with the mailout. This enabled people who may not access to the internet to provide feedback. We received five calls about the project.

### Drop-in sessions

Two drop-in sessions were held at the park to provide face-to-face engagement with our project team. While the initial session mid-week session proceeded, the weekend session had to be rescheduled to an evening timeslot due to COVID-related restrictions. Combined, twenty-nine people registered to attend the sessions.

Large format posters were displayed along with copies of the plan. Attendees were encouraged to rate what they liked or disliked about the plan on the maps and provide a sticky note comment about an area of interest. Community members were also encouraged to discuss issues with our team. In total, 20 likes/dislikes were recorded, as well as 35 individual comments.

### Community petition

The Barwon Heads Association submitted a petition with 553 signatures seeking greater planning protections for the park, as well as a significant landscape overlay for the area.



# Who we engaged

As the park is the heart of a small and close-knit community, we targeted local residents and groups, but also provided opportunities for the broader community to contribute their views.

In total, 174 people participated in the Barwon Heads Draft Master Plan engagement process. Seventy-eight per cent engaged online, 17 per cent engaged in-person and the remaining 5 per cent by phone or email. Other informal participation occurred through comments on both our Facebook page, as well as the Talking Heads Facebook page. A community-led petition calling for greater planning protection for the park also attracted 553 signatures.

Additionally, the Project Reference Group represented all the stakeholder groups actively leasing or licensing space in the park, as well as community representatives.

## SURVEY RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN

As Figure 1 shows, 87 per cent of respondents were general users of the park, 36 per cent were part of a sporting club, 16 per cent were part of a community organisation and 5 per cent were members of a service organisation.

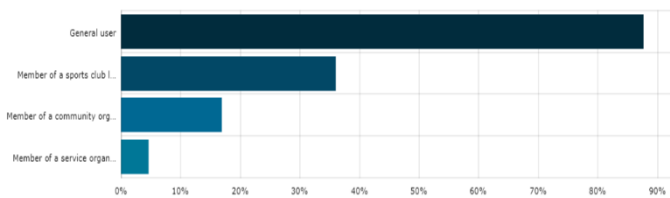


Figure 1: Survey respondents by type

Over 56 per cent of respondents indicated they use the park daily (see Figure 2). This demonstrates how highly engaged survey respondents are with the park.

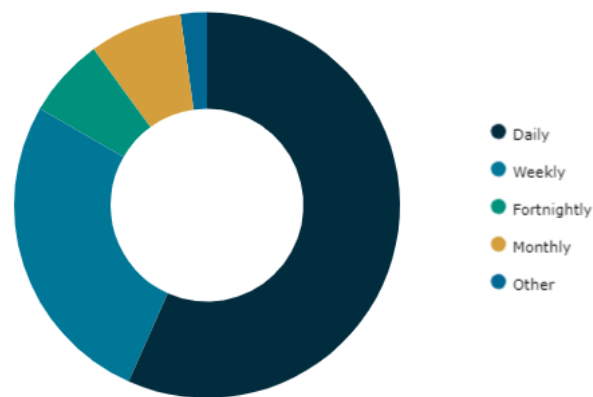


Figure 2: Survey respondent use of the park

When asked their main reasons for visiting the park, survey respondents indicated that the main reason for visiting the park was for general use and passive recreation, dog walking and then exercise and sport (see Figure 3, below).



Figure 3: Survey respondent reasons for visiting the park

As a whole the engagement reached a representative sample of the intended target audience and was a success in terms of its reach amongst the community.

# What we heard

The level of engagement gives us a high degree of confidence that the feedback we received was representative of the community's views and aspirations for the park and, importantly, their views on the draft plan.

All feedback was analysed to tease out key themes and specific issues that needed to be reflected on and, where appropriate, incorporated into the plan.

There was a strong overall theme in the feedback that the park is well-loved as it is and that, generally, the community don't want to see a great deal of change. The protection of the park and its character was therefore central to much of the feedback.

The feedback about the plan was generally very positive with:

- over 80 per cent of survey respondents 'very supportive' or 'supportive' of the vision and goals
- 70 per cent of survey respondents 'very supportive' and 'supportive' of the proposed management zones and
- 70 per cent of survey respondents 'very supportive' and 'supportive' of the recommendations proposed.

The feedback was grouped into five key themes, ranked in terms of the level of feedback:

1. Protect open space and character of the park from over development
2. Sustainable pavilions
3. Bike discovery area
4. Environmental and cultural heritage
5. Dog access

## BREAKDOWN OF FINDINGS

### Vision and goals

As Figure 4 shows, more than 80 per cent of survey respondents supported the vision and goals described in the draft plan. This was further validated through some of the visioner tool posts and discussions at drop-in sessions.

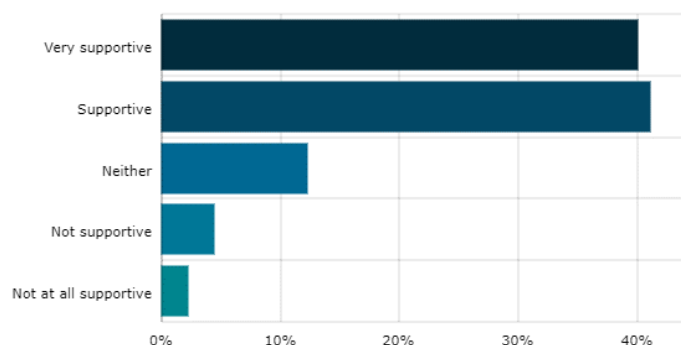


Figure 4: Survey respondent support of draft plan

### Management zones

Four management zones were proposed for the park to guide future management, use and development. As Figure 5 shows, over 70 per cent of survey respondents supported the proposed management zones.

Of those not supportive of the management zones, suggested improvements included greater recognition and protection for open spaces, as well as concerns that the active sport and recreation zones may become overdeveloped.

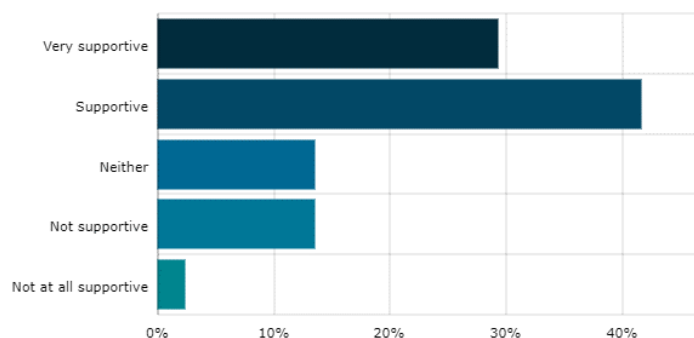
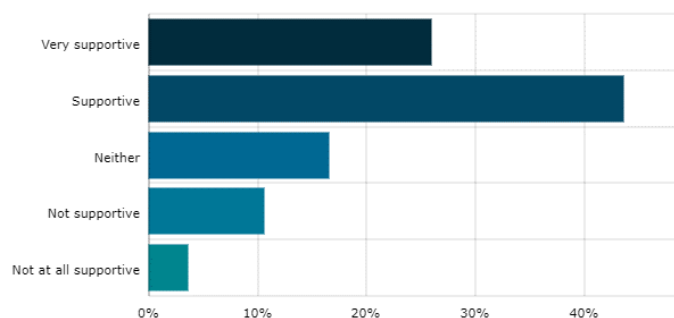


Figure 5: Survey respondent support for proposed management zones

### Recommendations

As Figure 6 shows (see next page), 70 per cent of survey respondents supported the 42 recommendations included in the draft plan, which covered all themes and uses of the park.



**Figure 6: Survey respondent support for draft plan recommendations**

## KEY THEME 1 – PROTECT OPEN SPACE AND CHARACTER OF THE PARK FROM OVERDEVELOPMENT



**Image 3: A view across the Village Park soccer oval**

Twenty-four contributions were made about this topic using the visioner tool, which was 15 per cent of the total visioner comments received. Fifty-two comments were made about this topic in the survey, making it the most significant topic discussed.

The Barwon Heads Association led a campaign for a significant landscape overlay to be applied to the park using a petition, which attracted 553 signatures. The primary reason for this was concern about a loss of open space from overdevelopment, and the impact this might have on the character of the park. Another significant concerns was controlling and managing future building development.

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**“We love the park and want the natural aspect to be maintained and protected.”**

**“Barwon Heads is desperate to maintain its character of being a village. We need more planning overlays like this to ensure we preserve it”**

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## KEY THEME 2 – SUSTAINABLE PAVILIONS

A key flow on from the first theme was a desire to not only limit the number and footprint of pavilions in the park, but to ensure their design was appropriate to the character of the park. Multi-use was identified as a priority.

### Bowls Pavilion



**Image 4: The Barwon Heads Bowling Club pavilion (above) and bowling club members (below)**

There was majority support for the establishment of a new bowling club pavilion on the west-side of the bowling green. Twelve responses were supportive, seven responses were neutral and gave feedback around design and multi-use. Four were not supportive with concern with potential overdevelopment.



### Tennis pavilion

There were only three comments made about the internal upgrade of the tennis pavilion – one in support and two questioning the potential for multi-use.

### Cricket, soccer, football pavilion

The upgrade to the shared cricket, soccer, football pavilion did not receive a great deal of feedback. However, comments received were focused on female participation.

### Scouts Group and 13<sup>th</sup> Beach Boardriders

The Scouts withdrew their support for the location and shared proposal in the plan, expressing a preference to consider the feasibility of their maintain their current location, or examining other potential locations in the park. There were nine comments about this in the survey and one submission from the 1<sup>st</sup> Barwon Heads Scout Group, which was also supported by the Barwon Heads Association.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Beach Boardriders made a submission strongly supporting a home for their group using both the visioner and survey tools. In total, this accounted for 21 comments or votes received via the visioner tool (13 per cent of total comments) and 18 comments received via the survey tool (11 per cent of total comments). This was the largest area of feedback we received about pavilion changes in the park.

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**“Renewal and upgrades of buildings is long overdue. Multipurpose buildings make sense instead of several smaller ugly structures.”**

**“Scout club facilities, should be redeveloped at current site”**

**“13th beach boardriders MUST be part of this plan”**

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## KEY THEME 3 – BIKE DISCOVERY AREA

The recommendation for a new bike discovery area for children and young people was strongly supported and was one of the most highly discussed topics. Twenty-five per cent of the visioner feedback was in regard to this topic (42 contributions). Of this feedback, 18 per cent was supportive, which was similar to the proportion of supportive feedback received through the survey.

There was a desire expressed to move the site to the south of the playground one segment of the community, while another sought to have it relocated out of the park. There was also a strong desire to see the existing damage addressed.

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**“It will be wonderful to have a bike discovery park for the kids locally. Let’s keep our kids outdoors and active, challenging themselves”**

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## KEY THEME 4 – ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE



**Image 5: Aerial view of the Moonah woodland**

There are several recommendations in the plan that are focused on improving and protecting the Moonah Woodland, protecting mature trees, enhancing vegetation corridors, and removing weeds from the Dune woodland. There was strong support for protecting the park environment, with survey feedback on this topic accounting for approximately 15 per cent of all comments.

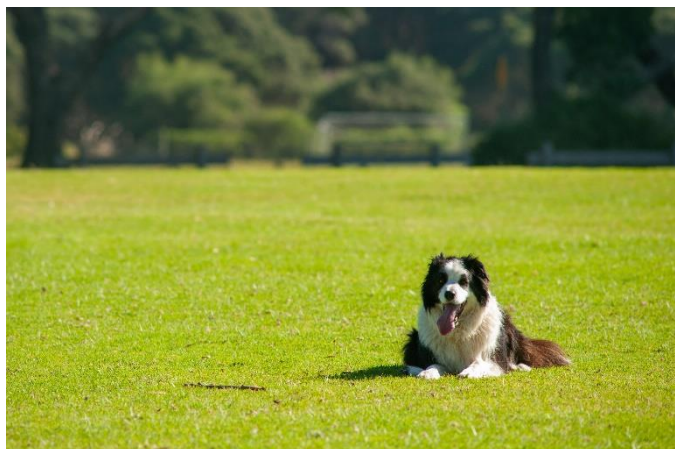
The feedback also suggested support for protecting the cultural values of the site, as well as educating a broader audience about these values.

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**“I appreciate acknowledging the significant and protected cultural heritage of the park and the awareness of improving the understanding of cultural values”**

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## KEY THEME 5 – DOG ACCESS



**Image 6: An off-lead dog enjoying the open spaces at Village Park**

The recommendation to provide a combination of areas that are dog on-lead, dog off-lead and dog-free was generally supported. However, there was some confusion over the way these areas were mapped. There were 31 responses relating to dogs, with 19 supporting the current recommendation. Eight comments suggested building a fenced dog park and 4 related to dog bins, behaviour, compliance and more freedoms.

Dog orders were recently reviewed as part of a separate consultation that ran in conjunction with this master plan engagement. This resulted in changed dog orders, which have increased dog-off lead areas in the park.

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**“Please don’t take away the off-leash area when no sporting events on. Enclosed dog parks off-leash are great for some dogs, but not for all”**

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## OTHER FEEDBACK

### The Barwon Heads & District Pony Club



**Image 7: Aerial view of the Barwon Heads and District Pony Club**

The Barwon Heads & District Pony Club has low membership numbers and there was a lack of support for the facility upgrades. There was a strong desire to retain open spaces for varied informal use, including as retaining the dog-off-lead use recently adopted.

There was only one survey comment seeking to retain the existing club facilities, with seven comments seeking to either reduce the facility size or relocate it. One submission also requested the club be removed from the park.

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**“Pony club area is rarely used and could be made available elsewhere on the Bellarine. this would increase the available space for open recreation. the area is currently not well maintained and needs mowing more frequently”**

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### Petanque

An email was sent by a representative of a petanque group (approximately 20–40 players) to request a small Petanque piste in the park. This is a 12 x 6 metre gravel rink where players throw their boules/balls towards a target ball.

# How we are responding

The key purpose of seeking community input is to ensure the master plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the community.

The project team reviewed and considered all feedback and key themes in preparation of the final plan, incorporating a number of changes.



## KEY THEME 1 – PROTECT OPEN SPACE AND CHARACTER OF THE PARK FROM OVERDEVELOPMENT

To improve recognition of the significance and character of the park and help protect it from overdevelopment, the following changes to the master plan were made:

- updated goals and objectives
- revised management zones
- new building design guidelines
- an updated statement of landscape and character significance
- additional table of spatial area allocations
- additional recommendations to implement the management zones, statement of significance, building design guidelines and protection of open space.



## KEY THEME 2 – SUSTAINABLE PAVILIONS

Most pavilion projects identified in the draft plan were well-supported. Those clubs that are ready are already moving into a planning and delivery phase.

The main change incorporated into the final master plan is the withdrawal of the proposed site for the scouts and boardriders due to the lack of support the proposal received from the scouts. Further feasibility planning will be recommended for this project.

### Shovel-ready projects

- Bowls pavilion and tennis pavilion

### Concept design required

- Cricket, soccer, football pavilion

### Feasibility work required

- Scouts and boardriders



## KEY THEME 3 – BIKE DISCOVERY AREA

The recommendation for a new bike discovery area was strongly supported, but there was a push to review the location. Alternatives suggested included a site south of the playground, or conversely outside of the park.

We investigated these ideas further and have confirmed that the preferred site for the proposed bike discovery area is south of the playground. This was discussed further with a group of local children and parents who have advocated for the bike area to be created and this change has now been incorporated into the plan.



## KEY THEME 4 – ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The recommendations were tidied up and regrouped, but all the specific environmental actions remain the same. The cultural heritage recommendations have also been clarified in the final plan in response to community feedback.



## KEY THEME 5 – DOG ACCESS

The final plan will incorporate the outcomes of the revised dog orders that were established as part of a separate consultation process. This will increase the availability of dog-off lead areas in the park.

In response to feedback, we reviewed our fenced dog park guidelines and found Village Park is not a suitable site for such a facility. This is due to the space required, anticipated level of demand and competing need to retain a less-developed character to the park.

## OTHER FEEDBACK

Due to low club membership numbers and feedback received from the community, the recommended lunging rink has been removed from the plan. However, the requested Petanque piste has been reviewed and a potential site has been identified. This has been included in the plan as a possible community recreation asset.

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# Conclusion

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**All feedback and proposed responses have been discussed with individual stakeholder groups and the Project Reference Group and incorporated into the final master plan.**

Both the updated plan and this report will be tabled for discussion and endorsement at the 26 October 2021 Council meeting.



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# Appendix A

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The key objective of the survey was to gauge community support for the plan, as well as ascertain if there were any other opportunities or issues not identified.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative questions were included, as followed:

- How supportive are you of the vision and goals in the draft master plan?
- Do you think they could be improved? If yes, please explain.
- How supportive are you of the management zones for the park? (Please circle)
- Do you think they could be improved? If yes, please explain.
- How supportive are you of the recommendations proposed in the plan? (Please circle)
- Do you think there are any other issues that need to be addressed in the park?
- Which of the following areas have issues that need to be addressed? (Please circle)
- Please explain the issue/s you have identified.
- Would you like to leave feedback on a second topic?
- Please explain the issue/s you have identified.
- Would you like to leave feedback on a third topic?
- Please explain the issue/s you have identified.
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Barwon Heads Village Park?
- What is your involvement or connection to the park? (Please circle)
- Do you belong to a local group or organisation? If yes, please list below:
- How often do you use the park? (Please circle)
- What would be the main reason you visit the park? (Please circle)