

Community Advisory Panel Recommendations Report

June 2023

Acknowledgement

Moonee Valley City Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land - the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, their spirits, ancestors, elders and community members past and present.

Background

On 13 September 2022, Moonee Valley City Council (Council) resolved to establish an ongoing Moonee Valley Community Advisory Panel, that is reflective of the diverse community of Moonee Valley, to engage about the key policies of Council.

Council understands that community members are well placed to advise on matters that are of direct impact on our diverse communities of Moonee Valley.

The Panel met and deliberated on three occasions; 13 May, 27 May and 3 June 2023. This report is the recommendations written by the Panel.

The Panel Remit

How can Council achieve biodiversity in public open spaces?

The vision of the Panel for biodiversity in Moonee Valley

Beyond 2040, Moonee Valley has biodiversity that...

Leverages and integrates all public open spaces and policies so that all species (especially indigenous ones) can thrive to:

- Improve health and wellbeing
- Lessen the impact of climate change
- Enable access for everyone
- That sets a high benchmark
- Increase education and engagement.

Recommendation 1:

To include private space possibilities in the Council biodiversity plans.

Intent:

To maximise biodiversity in all spaces and to utilise all available opportunities for maximum impact.

Recommendation 2:

Include plants from different regions of the world, that reflect our multiculturalism, and are resilient and appropriate to the Australian climate.

Intent:

To educate on the multiculturalism of our community. To support native and indigenous plants to adapt to climate change.

Recommendation 3:

To provide opportunities for community involvement in the ideation, implementation, and maintenance of biodiversity initiatives.

Intent:

The intent is to provide a variety of opportunities for engagement that cater to individual interests and needs, to leverage the knowledge and expertise of our diverse community and identify common goals.

This will foster a sense of ownership and provide greater connection with public open spaces (e.g. through community groups such as Friends of Steele Creek and Moonee Valley Sustainability Group).

Recommendation 4:

To effectively, efficiently and impactfully balance competing public open space priorities in a manner that bolsters biodiversity across the municipality.

Intent:

Consider the inclusion of biodiversity to all public open space but not at the expense of active public open space.

Where practicable, add to the asset pool of passive public open space (gardens, reserves, rivers, wetlands) and active public open space (ovals, playing fields, playgrounds) so that the need for both is not compromised.

To accommodate projected population growth, acquire additional public open space assets to address community needs.

Recommendation 5:

Establish dedicated children's open spaces to educate kids about native flora and fauna.

Intent:

To educate, involve, and foster ownership by our future generation in the importance of taking care of biodiversity.

Recommendation 6:

Create Council biodiversity policy that is integrated into all Council areas and prioritises biodiversity in all public open spaces.

Intent:

Biodiversity needs a holistic and interconnected response because all open spaces affect biodiversity in parks.

Biodiversity is best achieved by Council insuring everyone works together to consider biodiversity in all developments, maintenance and decisions across Council, including decisions involving open spaces not owned by Council.

Recommendation 7:

Plant local native and introduced species that grow well together.

Intent:

To establish biodiversity that copes with climate change.
Greater diversity ensuring sustainable health of species.

Recommendation 8:

Maintain and create a variety of public open spaces.

Intent:

Increase the quantity of, and improve the quality and complexity of biodiversity within our open spaces.

Recommendation 9:

Council to work with First Nations people (Wurundjeri Woi wurrung), biologists, health experts, sustainability, historians and economists.

Intent:

The right sources should inform the what, why and how.

To provide social, economic and environmental depth, feasibility, and understanding to bolster progress now and in the future. Drawing from a large number of experts will increase trust, knowledge and intended outcomes.

Recommendation 10:

To connect public spaces along waterways and create wider corridors of natural vegetation.

Intent:

To enable migration of wildlife between areas, improving health and diversity of species.

Providing greater areas of vegetation along waterway banks will prevent erosion, create natural flood plains and filter and clean waterways.

Recommendation 11:

For Council to use pest control systems that are sustainable and limit the damage to biodiversity.

Intent:

To identify potentially more natural or less toxic options while still limiting the amount of damage caused by introduced and native species.

This will maintain a healthy and natural environment.

Recommendation 12:

To build and rehabilitate ecosystems that are rare, threatened and near threatened.

Intent:

“Without bugs we die” - Sir David Attenborough. We need to protect the unique Australian native flora and fauna. Consider the cost and value to the broader ecosystem and community.

Recommendation 13:

Develop a long-term strategy for planning, maintenance and acquisition of open spaces.

Intent:

For future generations to enjoy. To make sure we don't drop the ball as other priorities come up.

Recommendation 14:

Create connections between open spaces by planting wildflowers, encouraging nature-strip gardening, and underplanting green spaces.

Intent:

Create a variety of habitats that interconnect, ensuring animal health and ongoing regeneration of species, for example flowers feed insects that birds eat.

Utilise underused public land and increase the amount of nature people can access.

Partner with companies that control the land to plant wildflowers under high voltage powerlines, along railways and freeway corridors.

Recommendation 15:

To collaborate with adjoining Councils and other governmental agencies.

Intent:

To maximise opportunities for complimentary or joined biodiversity projects specifically to harmonise approaches between Moonee Valley Council and other Councils that adjoin our waterways.

To share knowledge and expertise about successful initiatives.

Recommendation 16:

Set S.M.A.R.T. goals for and track the progress of all biodiversity efforts.

Intent:

To benchmark against best practice

To inform and communicate individualised milestones to each member of the 13 neighbourhoods.

Recommendation 17:

Consider environmentally sustainable development when designing, developing and delivery of public open space infrastructure.

Intent:

- Ensure that building and engineering standards are maintained
- Ensure that reuse, recycle and repurpose materials are implemented where possible
- Appreciate the benefits of mental and physical health in the design of Public Open Space (including provision of quiet spaces).

Recommendation 18:

Balance biodiversity with accessibility for all community members.

Intent:

Council to consider / investigate sustainable alternatives to the use of concrete to improve biodiversity whilst making accessibility available to all community members.

Recommendation 19:

To purchase and repurpose land.

Intent:

Create new and increase the amount of green open spaces nearby to residents.
Repurposing council owned areas (e.g. roads, rooftops, open spaces).

Recommendation 20:

The consideration of safety, access and equity in the development and maintenance of public open space.

Intent:

- To continue to rewild public open spaces in a sustainable manner
- To ensure users of public open spaces are safe at all times
- The users of public open space do not impinge on amenity and privacy of adjoining privately owned land.