

# REVISED HANNAH WATTS PARK PRECINCT MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Preliminary Findings and Recommendations Report

September 2026



# INTRODUCTION

In 2018, a master plan for the Hannah Watts Park Precinct ('the Park') was prepared and adopted by Council. The master plan has guided investment and development in the Park since that time and some good progress on implementation has been made.

Some recent implementation projects have deviated from the plan. Whilst flexibility is important, the deviations have quite significant implications for other parts and uses of the Park. As a result, the master plan needs to be updated.

The purpose of this master plan update is to coordinate a contemporary plan based on current conditions and contemporary opportunities, and in response to the needs of user groups and the wider community.

There are both opportunities and constraints for the future of the Park. It is on the one hand an established and functioning open space with a considerable history. There are also certain strategic and policy requirements, as well as community expectations, about what needs to be provided for in the future.

Our aim is to create an overall framework to guide the further development and enhancement of the Park – one which objectively balances pragmatism with a healthy dose of vision – and is supported by user groups and the community.

## What the master plan update does and doesn't do...

We are updating the existing the master plan. It is not a full-scale review involving re-evaluation of entirety of the master plan and production of a fully-updated master plan. Our focus is on four main aspects:

- Resolving the implications of deviations from current master plan recommendations,
- Refining and evolving recommendations that could be more ambitious,
- Identifying recommendations that are considered to no longer be suitable, and
- Identifying gaps in master plan recommendations.

An updated master plan will be prepared. This will include a high-level, illustrative representation of the structure and functions of the Park, as well as clear directions for what is intended, and actions to guide implementation. For more complex areas of the Park, additional detail may be shown or described to ensure that the planning intention is clear.

The substantive recommendations of the current master plan remain relevant and important, and will be continued. A logical and effective means of clearly connecting the current and updated master plans will need to be resolved.

Most master plan recommendations will require more detailed planning and design, as they progress toward implementation. These will be future projects, including community engagement. Some examples include:

- The layout of parking areas and the number of spaces to be provided
- The specific activities and elements of the proposed youth precinct
- The play elements and design of the proposed play space
- The types of public furniture, materials and plantings to be used

## The process so far...

We have reviewed the existing master plan and various relevant plans, policies and strategies. We have also talked with relevant internal (Council) teams and visited and walked the Park on foot. This has informed a high level analysis and preliminary recommendations for the master plan – as a draft for discussion.

Discussions have also taken place with a range of park user groups to seek their views on the preliminary recommendations.

A diagrammatic representation of the recommendations is provided in the following short report. We have also identified the key recommendations of the current master plan that are supported to be carried forward and continued.

Our aim is to prompt conversations about how the master plan can guide the best possible outcomes for the Park and the community that it serves.

## Where to from here...

The process from here will involve:

- Review of preliminary recommendations in response to community feedback
- Drafting of an illustrative master plan and action plan
- Public display of the illustrative masterplan
- Master plan revisions as appropriate in response to submissions
- Adoption/endorsement of the final updated master plan



LOCATION PLAN



Overview

|                       |                                                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Classification:       | Regional passive/active                                 |
| Reserve area:         | Approx. 22Ha                                            |
| Population catchment: | Municipality-wide – 230,000 (2026); 440,000 (projected) |

Existing uses

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Organised Sports    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>AFL</li><li>Cricket</li><li>Netball</li><li>Lawn bowls</li></ul>                                                                                                                                |
| Informal activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Playgrounds</li><li>Picnic</li><li>Tennis</li><li>Skate</li><li>Netball</li><li>Community events (large and small)</li><li>Kick-a-bout spaces</li><li>Creek trail walking and cycling</li></ul> |



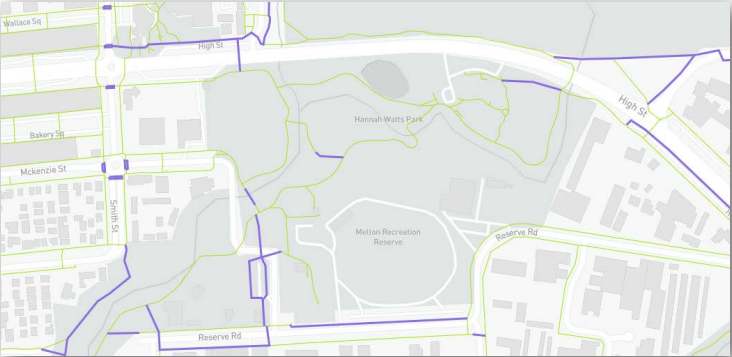
Footpath crossing of the Toolern Creek

Relevant strategic plans and policies

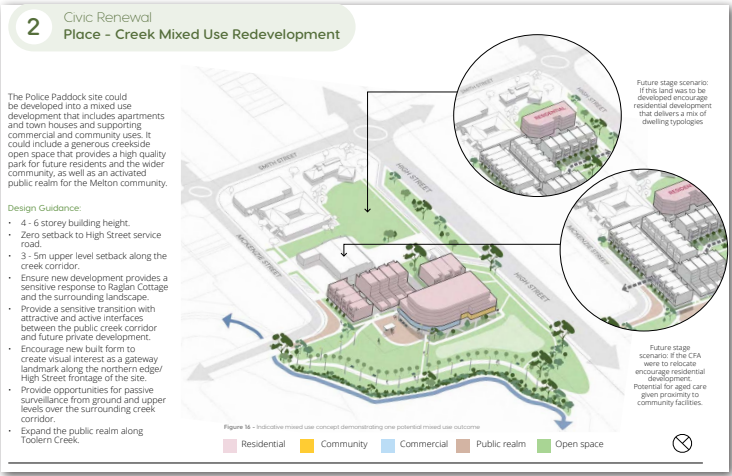
Hannah Watts Park Precinct - Master Plan  
(Melton City Council, 2018)



Pedestrian and Cyclist Plan  
(Melton City Council, 2022)



Melton Town Centre Revitalisation Plan  
(Melton City Council, 2024)



Additional relevant documents

- Melton Open Space Strategy 2016-2026 (Melton City Council, 2016)
- Off-Street Car Parking Guidelines (Melton City Council, 2015)
- Sports Facility Demand Strategy (Melton City Council, 2017)
- High Street Pedestrian Refuge Draft Layout Plan (Melton City Council, 2024)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Busy dual-lane highway interface to the northern edge of parkland



Play space in poor condition with no accessible play equipment.



Picnic area at the Old Melton Reservoir in fair condition however lacking accessible path to amenities.



Recently upgraded playspace and kick-about space in good condition.



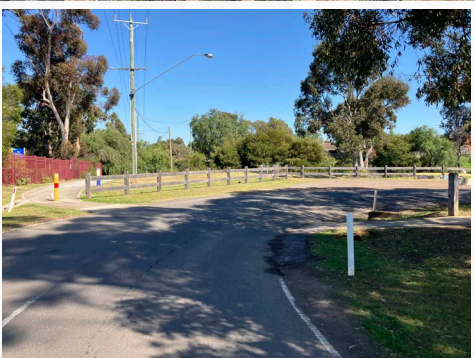
Public access toilet block in poor condition.



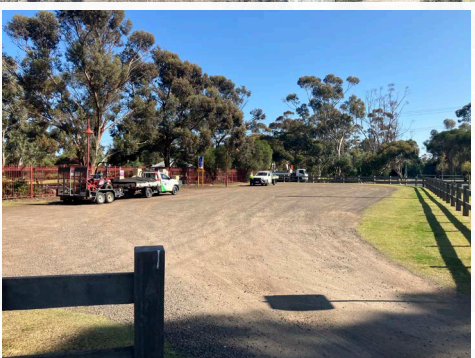
Public tennis court and netball court including seating and shelter in poor condition.



Toolern Creek Trail lacks safe crossing along Nixon Street.



The Willows Historical Park gravel car park.



Skate park in good condition however amenities in close proximity including seating, shelter and path network in poor condition.



Multi-use court in good condition with portable change rooms and toilets.



Play space in fair condition however lacking inclusive play.



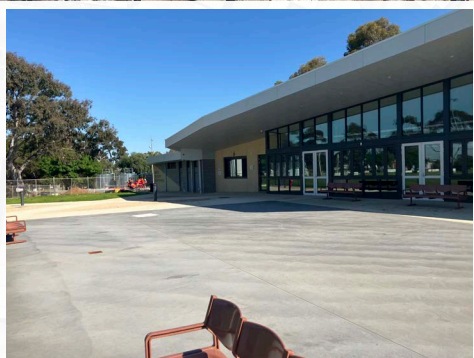
Key pedestrian linkage to the North and West of Hannah Watts Park.



Path crossing over Toolern Creek in poor condition.



Recently constructed pavilion concourse with large area of concrete.



KEY ANALYSIS POINTS — ACCESS

- 1

**Toolern Creek**

The waterway is a foundational feature of the parkland however there are limited opportunities to access/engage with the creek/water (excluding several bridge/ culvert crossings).
- 2

**Creek crossings**

The eastern side of the park (Hannah Watts playground, etc) is disconnected from the Country Club and pavilion/oval precinct beyond, due to the absence of a creek crossing and path. This gap is not proposed to be addressed by the current Master Plan.
- 3

**Pedestrian Access and Entrances**

The reserve lacks identifiable/presentable pedestrian entrance treatments in prominent/important locations (e.g. arrival from the Town Centre via McKenzie Street) not addressed by Master Plan.
- 4

**High Street pedestrian crossing**

Absence of safe crossing into the parkland from Civic Precinct/Town Centre not addressed by Master Plan.
- 5

**Pedestrian Paths**

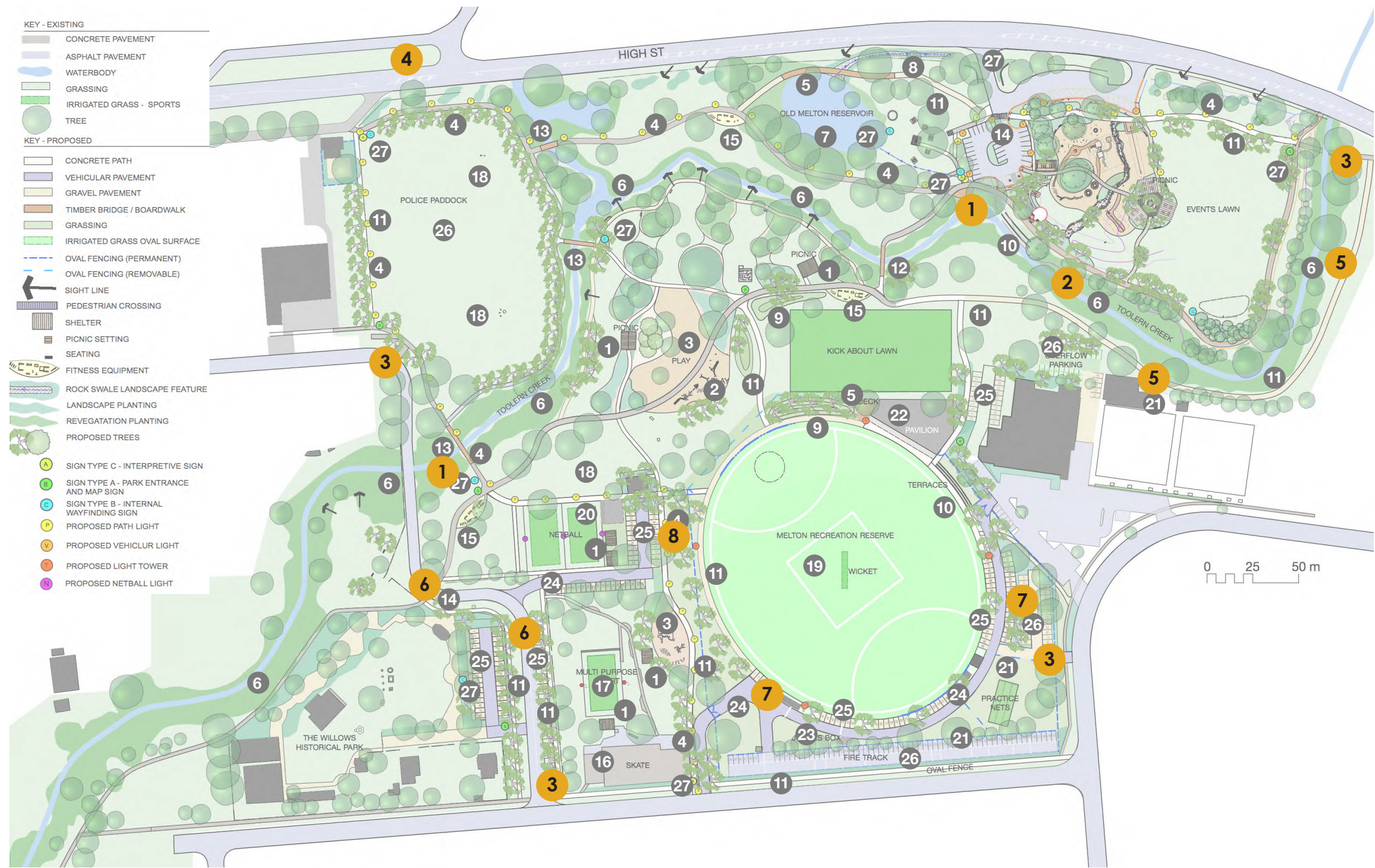
Several Master Plan proposed paths require modification due to site changes. Additional path proposed along creek is not supported.
- 6

**Internal road (Nixon Street)**

Through-vehicle traffic and road environment creates a physical barrier within a park setting where people movement and safety should be prioritised. Master Plan recommendation to add a raised crossing is supported, but further interventions are needed.
- 7

**Oval parking**

Parking arrangements around the oval and pavilion are based on the proposed realignment of the oval. The two points of access/egress is supported however there is limited space available for additional parking to the east.



- 8

**Central carpark**

The newly under-constructed car park associated with the pavilion provides the basis for a larger central carpark - compared to the master plan - to service multiple uses/activities in this area of the park. The existing entrance off Reserve Road as been retained rather than the proposed entrance off Nixon Street.

KEY ANALYSIS POINTS — LAND USE & ACTIVITY

- 9

**New pavilion**

The alternative location of the building and car park compared to the master plan needs to be integrated with the wider park. The pavilion concourse is exposed to the elements and limited in public realm amenities and landscaping.
- 10

**Reserve Oval**

The location of the new pavilion and central carpark prevents re-orientation of the oval as per the Master Plan.
- 11

**Skate Park & Multi-Use Court**

Master Plan proposes Youth Precinct - partly constructed (skate park and multi-use court). Youth Precinct in this location is supported however lacks variety of activity and overall integration with internal and external connections.
- 12

**Play spaces**

Hannah Watts playspace has been upgraded per Master Plan. Creekside playspace offers a contrasting play setting and experience, and is centrally located, however requires updating and integration. The southern-most play space has limited play value - master plan recommendation to upgrade is not supported due to over-provision.
- 13

**Central public toilets**

Older facility with poor casual surveillance and too greater separation from play space.
- 14

**Willows heritage precinct**

Limited access and integration with the surrounding parkland is partly addressed but not well-resolved by the Master Plan recommendations.
- 15

**Old Melton Reservoir**

Former reservoir usually lacks water, is affected by highway noise and is considered unsuitable for further major investment (e.g. boardwalk) per the Master Plan.



- 16

**Hannah Watts events/kick-about space**

Used for smaller events (e.g. Carols by Candlelight) and otherwise a kick-about space with low utilisation. The Master Plan does not address passive potential.
- 17

**Police Paddock event space**

A large, under-utilised space (excepting several major events). The Melton Town Centre Revitalisation Plan recommends - post Master Plan development - rezoning and development of land within the Public Use Zone (approx. 0.8 Ha) for a mixed use, multi-storey building overlooking the parkland.

# PROPOSED KEY ELEMENTS OF UPDATED MASTERPLAN

- Recommendations**
- Toolern Creek**
- 1

Prepare and implement a revegetation plan for the Toolern Creek corridor based on a planting scheme appropriate to the urban park context and its management.
- 2

Enhance water access/viewing (decking, terracing, stepping stones etc) at selected locations along the creek.
- Pedestrian Linkages**
- 3

Investigate options for park gateway treatments at key locations: High Street, McKenzie/Nixon Streets, Reserve Road and Country Club interface.
- 4

Construct shared path connecting Hannah Watts Park with the Recreation Reserve, incorporating new bridge crossing of Toolern Creek.
- 5

Undertake staged improvements along Nixon Street to create a safer and more welcoming environment for all park users, and in particular to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 6

Streetscape improvements along Williams Street connecting to Melton Botanic Gardens.
- 7

Construct new path to Willows homestead.
- Car Parking**
- 8

Informal gravel car park extension to main car park.
- 9

Sealing of gravel car park (Willows Precinct).
- Informal Activities**
- 10

Investigate options for improving infrastructure and amenity to support events. In the long term, and subject to a suitable events space alternative, consider allocating part of the site for mixed use development (per Melton Town Centre Revitalisation Plan 2024 recommendation).
- 11

Investigate options to enhance the youth space to provide a more engaging range of facilities and activities.
- 12

Relocate central public toilets with improved visibility and path connection to/from play space.



- 13

Optimise play opportunities by consolidating two major play spaces - at Hannah Watts Park and centrally, adjacent to Toolern Creek. Upgrade the central play space to provide a second major play space for the park, including design to optimise its natural features and setting.
- 14

Remove the hard courts and reinstate with grassed surface and additional shade trees.
- 15

Improve landscaping and amenities to support informal gathering in proximity to the creek.
- 16

**Organised Sport and Facilities**  
Refer to Melton Recreation Reserve Master Plan for details of planning for football, netball, cricket and CFA training facilities.