



**Maribyrnong**  
CITY COUNCIL

**EXISTING FOOTSCRAY HOSPITAL  
ADVOCACY PLAN  
June 2024**



# Introduction

In 2019, the Victorian Government announced an investment of \$1.5 billion to construct a new Footscray Hospital. The hospital will be located on Ballarat and Geelong Roads and is expected to begin operations in 2025, with most of the services moving to the new facility.

The existing Footscray hospital, also known as the "People's Hospital", was made possible by the local community's commitment to raising funds in the early 1920s, to purchase the 5.5 hectares of land along Eleanor Street. Later, the community lobbied the State Government to establish a hospital for those who needed medical care close to home.

Over time, the site has expanded to include other facilities such as the former psychiatric hospital, Western Private Hospital, Brenbeal Childrens Centre, Orygen Youth Mental Health and Berbert Pop-Up Park. Currently, the Victorian Government owns 6.6 hectares of the site, with an additional 1.5 hectare parcel to the south owned by the Council.

The site presents significant opportunities to address infrastructure and service shortfalls. However, there are limitations, such as the heritage-listed Brutalist former psychiatric hospital and some ground remediation works required on the former quarry site. The existing site holds historical and community value, presenting an opportunity for community benefit and investment in future uses.

In late 2023, the Department of Transport and Planning commenced community consultation to discuss future opportunities for the existing Footscray Hospital site. The site's history has generated a high level of community interest on its future use.

In response to this, the Maribyrnong City Council will make a set of recommendations to the Victorian Government to influence the future use and development of the site. Council does not own or control the majority of the existing hospital site. Therefore, Council has engaged with the community to understand the site's local needs and inform our Footscray Hospital Advocacy Plan. Developing an understanding of local needs, including access to open space, movement around the site, housing access and choice and the need for additional social infrastructure has informed our recommendations.

As part of this advocacy plan Council has made the following assumptions in regards to the site:

- The land of the former quarry will be unviable for built form.
- The existing hospital buildings will be demolished while the Orygen facility will be retained onsite in its current form.
- Site design and development will be staged, according to services remaining on site and resources available.
- The heritage overlay on Brutalist building allows for future uses and internal refurbishment.

Recommendations within this plan will be presented to the Victorian Government, calling for high-quality outcomes that address local and regional needs.

# Community Insights

## Key Themes

Based on preliminary data recieved from the *Engage Vic Existing Footscray Hospital Consultation*

- Open space and greening of streetscapes
- Walking and cycling infrastructure
- Passive recreation, gathering spaces, arts and culture
- Affordable and diverse housing
- Small local businesses
- No profit driven development with poor quality and low amenity outcomes
- Do not want to see the site remain vacant or hazardous

## Surrounding Needs

Rated from most to least important

1. Greener Places and Streetscapes
2. More Open Space and Recreation
3. More Walking and Cycling Infrastructure
4. More Affordable Housing
5. More Housing Diversity
6. Increased Public Transport
7. More Local Job Opportunities
8. More Education and Training

## Open Space Amenities

Rated from most to least important

1. Gathering Places
2. Picnic tables and BBQs
3. Walking and Jogging Infrastructure
4. Playground
5. Community Services Hub
6. Sports Ground
7. Fitness Equipment



## Timeline:

The area now known as the City of Maribyrnong was a significant meeting place for the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and the Bunurong peoples and clans of the Kulin Nation, the pre-colonial landscape was grassy open woodland and plains.

1886 Rayner Quarries started operating.

1920-22 Community raises funds to purchase the 5.5 acre lot along Eleanor Street, Footscray from the Rayner Family.

Government gives go ahead to build 205 bed hospital.

The Footscray Psychiatric Centre opens in 1977 and remains operational until 1996.

Westhaven Community Aged Care Centre temporarily moves residents to the Footscray Psychiatric Hospital while their own facility was being rebuilt.

Victorian Government announces new Footscray Hospital.

Existing Footscray Hospital decommissioned.

Stage 1 complete.



1857 Footscray Post Office Opens, 1859 Footscray declared a municipality.

Rise of workplace accidents, influenza outbreak and floods increased demand for a local hospital in Footscray.

Appeals to the Victorian government to build a hospital in Footscray were unsuccessful. In 1935 with community donations and assistance of medical professionals a community medical clinic is opened.

1953 The hospital is officially opened and continues to grow with advanced facilities and university partnerships as a teaching hospital.

Established in 1993, Brenbeal Childrens Centre provides a high-quality childcare and kindergarten. The Centre is not-for-profit and managed by a parent committee. The building is owned and maintained by Maribyrnong City Council.

Western Private Hospital undergoes a multi-million dollar refurbishment.

New Footscray Hospital opens.

Site preparation and demolition (subject to DTP planning and site findings).

# Access and Movement

**A well-connected street network that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists, limits car usage on site, provides internal amenities, and integrates with the existing active transport network.**

## Strategies + Recommendations:

- Maribyrnong Integrated Transport Strategy
- Walking Strategy 2023-2033
- Bicycle Strategy 2020-2030
- Urban Forest Strategy 2018
- Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025

## Community Feedback

*"Connect local street network across the site with new pedestrian links."*

*"Would be great to have a proper bike path connecting to Jerrold and Stanlake Streets."*

*"Consider amenity improvements to Gordon St Local Activity Centre, as well as better links to Tram Route 82 (and revised / improved tram stops)."*

*"Keep the area free from through traffic and don't turn small local roads into busy routes."*

### Integrate the site with the existing movement network and projected active transport network:

- Ensure maximum permeability throughout the site to support flexibility in choice of routes for pedestrians and cyclists with increased safety and amenity

### Create safe, direct and accessible walking links through the site that link to surrounding network of services including:

- Gordon – Ballarat - Droop Street Route 82 tram corridor through to central Footscray and Footscray Station
- Footscray primary, middle and high schools
- Key open spaces on Essex St and to Footscray Park
- Edgewater neighbourhood activity centre shops and future retail at Kinnears
- The new Footscray Hospital

### Develop the site to prioritise high level of pedestrian amenity through:

- Safe and inclusive footpath network; reduce traffic related air pollution; canopy coverage; nature strip and kerb outstand plantings; high quality urban furniture; lighting; public art; pedestrian priority at intersections and vehicle crossovers; 30km shared zones
- Vehicle ingress to the periphery of the site to enable safe and high amenity movement infrastructure within the site
- New signalised pedestrian crossings along Gordon Street

### Prioritise cycling infrastructure, and limit vehicle access through the site:

- Connect with the existing and proposed future cycling network
- Improve safety of cyclists through priority at intersections, vehicle crossovers, separated/protected bike lanes and 30km shared zones.

### Improve accessibility, capacity, priority and frequency of tram and bus routes:

- Construct an accessible and integrated bus and tram stop at the corner of Gordon and Ballarat Streets
- Operate higher capacity trams and create tram priority along Route 82

### Encourage use of sustainable transport options while minimising the use of private vehicles:

- Develop models of housing with shared car use rather than private parking
- Improve access and the quality of public transport options available

### Ensure activated ground planes and soft interfaces that support passive surveillance and welcoming environments:

- Ensure the interface between the pedestrian priority street and buildings supports pedestrian amenity and safety



## Movement and Access

The existing site lacks east-west permeability through the site. The Stanlake-Jerrold cycling connection has been identified in the Bicycle Strategy 2020-2030, linking to Footscray High School. This would require safe crossing at Gordon Street.

Another secondary link from Eleanor-Rayner Street could provide a more direct route to central Footscray.

Whilst the North-South links to Everard Street provides a direct link to West Footscray train station, Eleanor Street a secondary link.

- ➔ Major through link
- ➔ Secondary link
- Bus Routes
- Route 82 Tram
- New or consolidated safe crossing
- Potential future tram/bus super stop



**Clockwise from top: Protected bike lanes;** support new and low confidence riders transitioning to cycling for transport. **Pedestrian Priority;** the inclusion of raised pedestrian thresholds connecting the site to key walking routes, supports walkability. **No car through roads;** with all internal streets to prioritise pedestrian and cycling movements.

# Public Open Space

**New 3.5 hectare municipal park connected to existing open space network, that supports informal passive recreation, with gathering spaces, walking and jogging infrastructure, native species and activated edges for passive surveillance.**

## Strategies + Recommendations:

- Open Space Strategy 2011
- Open Space 5-Year Addendum
- Urban Forest Strategy 2018
- Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025
- Walking Strategy 2023-2033
- Bicycle Strategy 2020-2030

## Community Feedback

*“Repurpose car parks, and historical quarry to green community space, walking, exercising and gathering. Similar natural amenity to Cruikshank Park in south of Maribyrnong Council area.”*

*“Create large natural areas with indigenous planting, like Newport Lakes. Not all recreation spaces should be formal and focussed on sport.”*

*“Please incorporate a walking track around/through the site, that is surrounded by green space/plants and is accessible for all abilities.”*

### Enhance open space network in Maribyrnong by filling in the gaps:

- Safeguard a minimum of **3.5 hectare** for high quality passive open green space, to support health and wellbeing outcomes

### Create attractive and vibrant public open spaces:

- Include a diversity of activities in public spaces that extend the hours of use
- Locate public toilets, play and recreation facilities in accessible and active areas to support longer stays
- Support designated rewilding areas within the green space
- Implement and prioritise water sensitive urban design WSUD opportunities throughout the site

### Preserve significant trees and increase canopy coverage:

- Protect the existing trees under the heritage overlay and other significant trees on site
- Achieve a 20% canopy cover as per *Maribyrnong Urban Forest Strategy*
- Prioritise hardy native tree species to support low maintenance and minimise irrigation requirements

### Create links between existing and new open spaces in Footscray and West Footscray to create an accessible and rich network:

- Identify streets that link open spaces and develop them as pedestrian priority corridors

### Ensure all future users of the site have convenient and safe access to and through public spaces:

- Connect the public space to the surrounding pedestrian network
- Provide multiple entry points to the green space to maximise walking catchment to public open space for nearby residents
- Locate entry paths with clear views to other exits from the public space.
- Continue pedestrian paths through the public space with direct, logical routes

### Establish and support activity at the edges of public spaces:

- Activate ground plane residential with alfresco and retail to ensure passive surveillance
- Arrange the public space to allow direct, clear sightlines from surrounding areas into and through public spaces

## Public Open Space

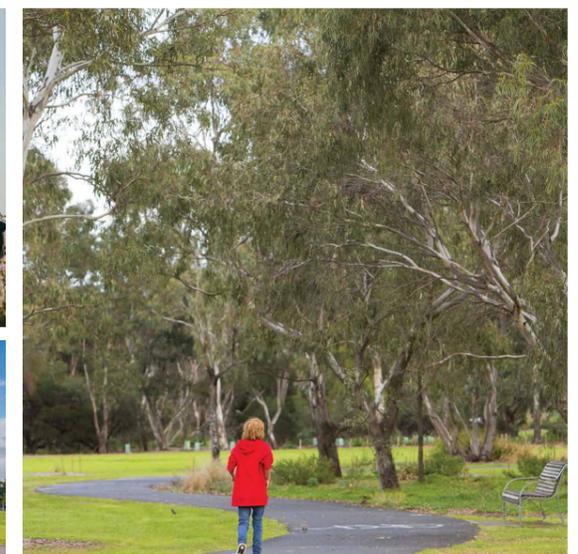


The existing car park largely follows the outline of the former quarry. To establish a minimum 3.5 hectare municipal park the green space should expand past the quarry to the edge of the site.

Multiple entry points throughout connecting to the street network dramatically improve the walkable catchment to open space for the community.

The perimeter path supports entry points and jogging and walking infrastructure.

- ➔ Entry point from existing street network
- Municipal Park green space



**Clockwise from top:** *Royal Park*; plenty of new tree growth, layers for interest and play, walking paths, open grass areas for unstructured recreation. *Newell's Paddock*; walking paths, native tree canopy coverage. *Plant 4 Bowden*; Open grass area, activated edges, alfresco, walking paths. *Parque Bicentenario, MXCD*: decommissioned petrol refinery turned into public park.

# Housing

**Affordable and social housing, thoughtfully designed with staggered three to eight storeys to create a distinct architectural identity and foster a sense of place. The design prioritises inclusivity, accommodating diverse groups and supports ageing in place.**

## Strategies + Recommendations:

- Housing Strategy 2011
- Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-2025

## Community Feedback

*"More low income and affordable housing."*

*"Significant % of any residential to be dedicated social and affordable housing."*

*"If any housing is built on the site I don't think it should be any higher than the existing height of the hospital."*

*"Support a diversity of residents new an old to forge and maintain meaningful community. Consider a diversity of future housing choice and type."*

*"High quality medium to high density affordable housing stepping down to 2-3 storeys at residential interface."*

*Interactive feedback map, Engage Vic, 2024*

### Housing Diversity and Affordability:

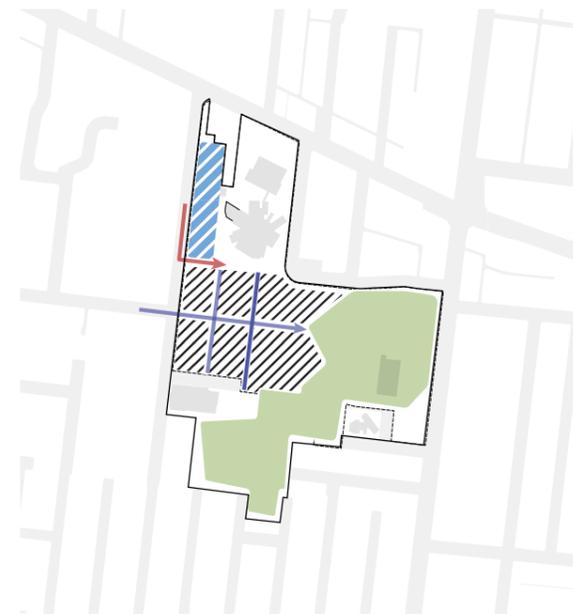
- Explore with the community and housing organisations a range of innovative and diverse housing responses with an emphasis on affordability for different household types
- Achieve a minimum 30% social and affordable housing (to include a minimum of 20% social and affordable housing to the low and very low income groups)
- Prioritise social housing for the 68% of singles that make up the priority waitlist
- Ensure there is significant net gain in social housing as a result of the redevelopment and any local public housing renewal in the area
- Mix of developers to encourage diversity in built form (appropriate to the existing urban character) and support a timely delivery

### Establish Sense of Place and Community:

- Three-storey height restrictions along Eleanor Street to remain sympathetic to the existing urban character
- Maximum eight-storey height restriction provided no overshadowing to municipal park
- Diversity in built form; varied typologies to meet the needs of different user groups; smaller plot sizes to ensure human scale developments (sympathetic to the existing urban character); visual variation; mixed use activated ground plane to support a variety of different activities and social interaction
- Mix of walk-up and walk-in typologies
- Flexible ground level design to support: hospitality; al fresco, retail, childcare, office space, healthcare, showroom/gallery spaces, salons, fitness, specialist stores
- Ground level activation to open on to public open space.
- Awnings, greening and shading at ground level to maximise usage through all seasons

### Healthy and Sustainable Housing:

- Support environmentally sensitive design principles and best practice approaches
- Encourage dual aspect apartments to achieve cross ventilation; passive cooling and maximise daylight and views
- Create semi-private communal courtyards with deep soil volume to support mature tree growth
- Include useable private outdoor spaces
- Support ageing in place with passive surveillance from upper levels



## Housing

Housing should be located to the east of the site, with three storey restrictions along Eleanor Street. Staggered heights upto 8 storeys would be supported, however, at no time should the municipal park be over shadowed, with overshadowing of cycling and walking links kept to an absolute minimum.

Consolidated parking for residents to be located underground with access from Eleanor Street.

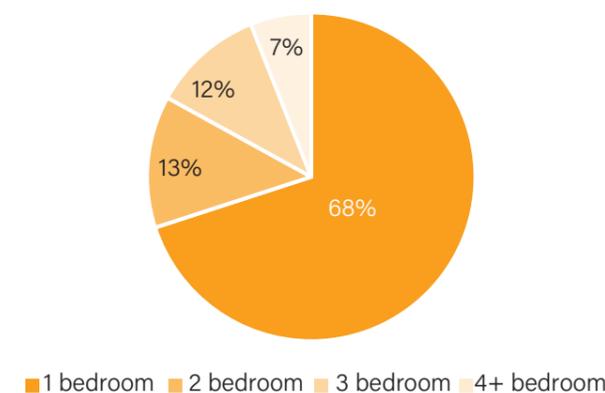
Further stages of development to continue housing along the Eleanor Street interface.

- ▨ Proposed housing location
- ▨ Future housing
- Consolidated underground parking entry
- Cycling link and internal street layout



*Clockwise from top left; Future Homes Designs Vic Gov; dual aspect, mature trees, opportunities for social interaction. Nightingale Village, Brunswick; Smaller plot sizes and different architects/developers creates visual interest and place identity, activated edges adjacent to green space.*

## Victorian Housing Register (Altona District)



**Figure 1: Altona District:** 68% of the priority waitlist is made up of 1-bedroom dwellings. This is to serve the highest demand for singles. The provision of social and affordable housing options should ensure adequate housing for these communities. Additionally, ensuring that community services are nearby.

# Social Infrastructure

**Fit-for-purpose Brutalist building that supports a variety of community and commercial uses at neutral cost to Council. Existing childcare facilities expanded to meet the growing demand for Early Years infrastructure. Residential buildings with mixed use ground planes to support, retail, hospitality and services to meet growing community needs.**

## Strategies + Recommendations:

- Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2020-2041
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2023
- Maribyrnong Community Plan 2040

## Community Feedback

*“Brutalist building could have adaptive uses and potentially uses that bring together art and health as complementary functions. Consider local projects like Abbotsford Convent case study.”*

*“Let’s get community groups into the Psych Hospital as soon as possible. The building is at risk if it doesn’t have activity in/around it after the hospital closes.”*

*“Create parkland and playground facilities around the children’s centre to provide a better environment for children to learn and grow.”*

*“Determine if childcare needs to expand facilities and consider how to integrate into site.”*

*Interactive feedback map, Engage Vic, 2024*

### Healthy Communities:

- Expand Brenbeal Childrens Centre in current location or relocate on the existing hospital site ensuring the kindergarten is connected to nature with outside play areas away from the main road
- Investigate opportunities to establish a community garden to be on the site, similar to the Yarrville Community Garden near Gowrie Clare Court
- Undertake social impact assessment and further research to establish additional complementary services required on the site

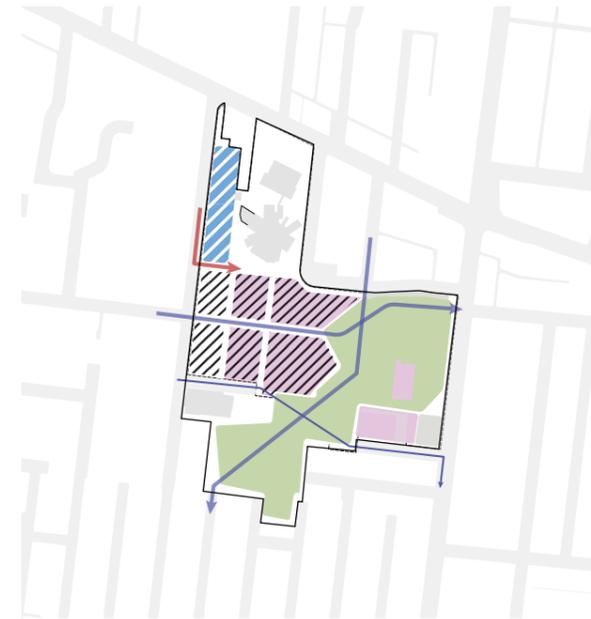
### Mixed Use + Adaptive Reuse:

- State Government ensure fit-for-purpose condition of the brutalist building to be handed over to Council at neutral cost to manage for community use
- Adaptive reuse required of the former brutalist psychiatric hospital; to prioritise community spaces, workshops, art studios, cultural centre, and performance spaces with limited commercial spaces
- Ensure design supports activated ground plane to support safety and social interaction
- Incorporate community consultation feedback to guide future uses and promote co-design approach with community and Council
- Ensure future designs are inclusive, accessible, equitable, and support social connection
- Future site uses adhere to universal design principles
- Establish controls to ensure the heritage buildings and the site more broadly does not remain vacant and fenced off
- State Government to work with Council and local community to support early and immediate activation opportunities for the former psychiatric building and surrounds

### Community Engagement:

- Meaningfully engage with First Nations people to develop an activation and participation plan for the site
- State and Local Government grants to support innovative grassroots and social enterprise opportunities for local community
- Promote opportunities for community energy generation programs such as battery and solar
- Electric vehicle charging stations for residents and visitors
- Flexible shared spaces for community groups and residents

## Social Infrastructure



Psychiatric Brutalist Building to be refurbished to fit-for-purpose use, with activated edges and interim controls to ensure the site doesn’t become vacant and dangerous.

Surface parking on edges closest to retail and community infrastructure, Rayner and Arthur Streets. Mixed use ground planes on residential to support activated ground plans and support growing community needs.



**Clockwise from top: Adaptive Reuse:** Social infrastructure adjacent to nature, supports a variety of users and is beneficial to achieving sufficient physical activity, social interaction, community engagement, passive surveillance. The Abbotsford Convent houses design studios, offices, school, cafes, with other activities nearby, this supports local jobs, and creates a sense of community and place. **Roskilde Festival Folk High School, CPH;** Decommissioned concrete factory the new folk high offers non-traditional education, focusing on fostering social responsibility and lifelong learning. **Lot 14, ADL;** Former Royal Adelaide Hospital now innovation, tech hub and mixed use. **Roskilde Festival Folk High;** An example of the workshop space (minimal natural light).

# Site Visioning

## 1 Municipal Park

Municipal park with 3.65 ha open space that supports a variety of uses. Informal passive recreation with cycling, jogging and walking paths and gathering spaces should be prioritised. Achieve 20% canopy coverage across the site.

## 2 Housing

Housing located east on the site with three storeys along Eleanor reaching a maximum of eight storeys concentrated in the centre of the site. Layout should minimise over shadowing, and support sense of place and various architectural identities.

## 3 Eleanor Street

Eleanor Street should retain the residential urban character, with building heights restricted to three storeys. Cycling lanes, pedestrian amenity and nature strips should support healthy communities.



Eleanor Street

## 4 Mixed-use Zone

Housing to incorporate mixed use activated ground plane, that ensures access to services that support growing community needs. With a mix of retail, hospitality and community services.

## 5 Passive Recreation

Walking and jogging paths to support passive exercise opportunities, support safe walking routes away from the main roads and increase the walkable catchment to green space.

## 6 Consolidated Parking

Parking to be located on the site edges to support part-time users. While consolidated underground parking to service housing residents, access via Eleanor Street. EV charging stations and bicycle parking to be located both above and below ground.

## 7 Brenbeal Expansion

Brenbeal Childrens Centre to expand to the east of the existing site, built form towards to Gordon Street to ensure outside play areas are north facing and not located near the main road. Play areas to be connected to nature.

## 8 Gathering Places

Gathering places scattered throughout the public open space that provides opportunities to meet and utilise the park with BBQ tables and seating facilities, to be located near play spaces, toilets and parking to ensure spaces are accessible.

## 9 Cycling Paths

Cycling paths connect Stanlake and Jerrold Streets, Eleanor and Rayner along the east-west connections. North-south connections provide direct access to onsite services, psych building and Brenbeal Childrens Centre. Additionally, internal streets prioritise pedestrians and cyclist over car users.

## 10 Brutalist Building

Brutalist Building to be handed over to Council to manage at a natural cost at fit-for-purpose condition and support social enterprise, NFP and community and arts uses. With activated edges and interim controls to ensure the site doesn't become hazardous.



Fmr Psychiatric Building





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