



# CREATING LIVEABLE OPEN SPACE: CASE STUDIES

This document has been prepared by the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure to assist local government, industry, property owners and other government agencies in understanding the opportunities to improve open space across Victoria.

Published by Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure  
1 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000. July 2013

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Printed managed by Finsbury Green

Printed on 55% recycled paper

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Photo: Brimbank Council

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Photo: DTPLI

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Having access to a variety of quality open spaces is vital for any community.

Throughout our lives we are likely to use many different types of open space, from playgrounds and active sporting facilities, to places where we can have a barbeque, enjoy the natural environment or sit down to read a book.

Research confirms that convenient access to quality open space has a positive influence on our sense of wellbeing, as well as our physical health.

As urban populations continue to grow and change, open space is in even greater demand. The challenge for planners is to ensure we get the maximum benefit from our existing open space assets and seek opportunities to deliver new open space where there is an identified need.

To do this we need to identify new ways to deliver open space that are driven by innovation and challenge conventional or traditional approaches.

This *Creating Liveable Open Space: Case Studies* showcases a number of innovative approaches for upgrading and delivering new open space assets. It includes case studies where open space has been reclaimed from existing roadways, quarries and drainage reserves as well as examples of new ways of working in partnership across government and with local communities.

One of the lessons from the case studies is the need to develop a robust plan, an Open Space Strategy, to guide open space development – one that includes a clear vision and a staged implementation process.

Experience shows that no open space issue is solved overnight. Detailed planning and consultation is essential to ensure the needs of current and future open space users are taken into account.

Strong leadership is also vital to take a project from concept through to completion, and to maintain the original vision when issues or objections arise.

A common theme running through the case studies in this best practice guide is the importance of building partnerships across government, the private sector and the community to ensure open space assets deliver the maximum possible benefits to the people they serve.

## OPEN SPACE CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### Open Space Strategy

- Do you have an Open Space Strategy? If so, is it less than ten years old?
- Do you need to review your Open Space Strategy?
- Do you have a current GIS layer of existing open space assets, including key attributes?
- Is your Open Space Strategy on your website and publicly available?

### Implementation

- Do you have a dedicated officer/manager responsible for implementation of the Open Space Strategy?
- Do you have an annual implementation plan? Is it aligned with the Council capital works budget?
- Is your Open Space Strategy a reference document to your planning scheme?
- Are there any other policies or strategies that need to be included in the Local Planning Policy Framework to support implementation of your OSS?
- Is there land that needs to be rezoned to reflect its open space designation?
- How do you collect open space development contributions? Does this need to be reviewed?
- Do you have a transparent process for documenting the funds and land that are accepted as open space contributions?
- Do you have a transparent process for documenting how open space contributions are spent?

### Outcomes

- Do you monitor changes in the quality, quantity and access of open space?
- Do you provide Council with an annual report on open space improvements and additions?
- Do you communicate open space improvements and additions to the community and other stakeholders?
- Do you have information publicly available on your website about the open space in your municipality and the facilities it includes?



## 2 OPEN SPACE



### **Open Space Strategy**

Central to high quality open space outcomes is a high quality strategy. Open Space Strategies are a critical component of understanding what open space assets you have now, likely demands from existing and potential population, demographic change and cultural preferences, where you need new or improved open space, and how you can work towards achieving your open space goals.

Open space planning is complicated by the fact that there are numerous types of open space, locations and community needs/desires, all with competing opportunities and constraints. Open space planning ensures all of these factors are considered and planned for in a detailed way. Without a strategy, open space assets can be left to deteriorate, which increases the risk of these spaces not meeting the community's recreation and leisure needs.

### **Implementation**

Once you have an Open Space Strategy, it is critical to start implementing the key elements. Two important first steps are to include the strategy as part of the local planning scheme and to consider the best mechanism for leveraging open space development contributions. By making sure your strategy is effectively embedded into your planning scheme, you will have a policy framework for decision making as part of the development process.

Delivering actions in the strategy and reporting regularly on achievements will show progress and build broad understanding of the initiatives required to improve open space in your area.

### **Outcomes**

Detailed planning and implementation of an Open Space Strategy should result in improved and better used open space in your area. Monitoring and feedback are critical to maintain support and improve delivery. Achieving these outcomes will not be easy or quick but the short and long term benefits will prove it was a worthwhile investment.



*Photo: Whitehorse Council*



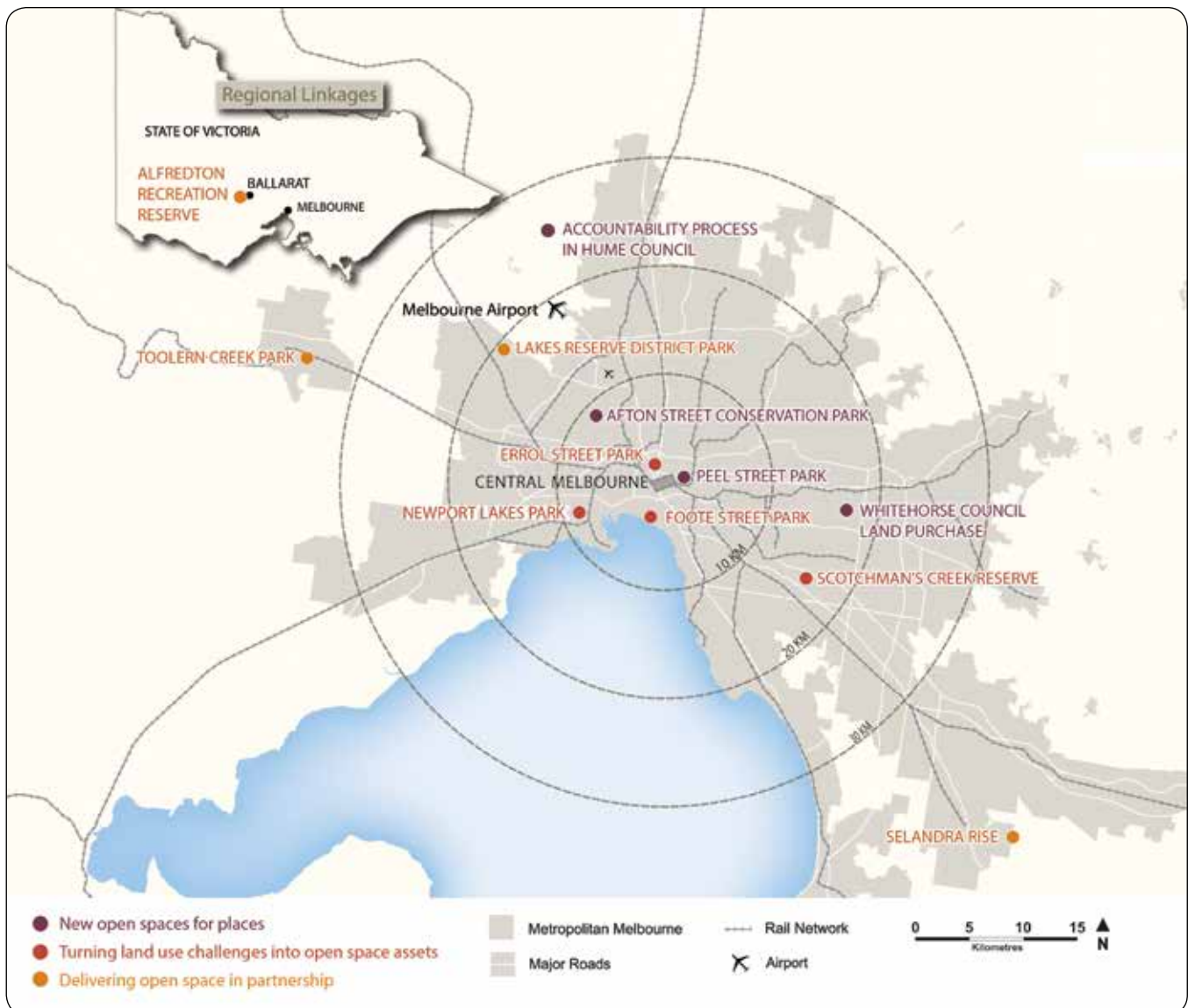


Photo: DTPLI

# 3 OPEN SPACE CASE STUDIES

The following case studies illustrate different ways that state government, local councils, landowners and other stakeholders have delivered a variety of innovative open space outcomes.

The case studies are from across Victoria and are only a small selection of the many successful examples of innovative approaches to open space planning and management that can be found.





*Photo: Moonee Valley Council*