

Youth Justice Centre Redevelopment Project, Cherry Creek

Project Overview

The Victorian Government is building a new youth justice centre to the west of Werribee, in the vicinity of Cherry Creek.

Providing a new youth justice facility is an essential part of the Government's commitment to improving community safety and modernising Victoria's youth justice system.

The new youth justice centre will play a key role in the rehabilitation of young people and children who are offending and improve community safety.

The youth justice system in Victoria

The youth justice system in Victoria focuses on the safety of the community and diverting young people away from further crime. It supervises young people on court orders in the community and manages young people in custodial centres.

Youth justice provides programs and resources to assist young offenders to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage their lives effectively without further offending. The youth justice service promotes opportunities for rehabilitation and seeks to contribute to the reduction of crime in the community through supervision, offending related programs and linkages to appropriate support services.

Youth justice provides developmentally appropriate services, programs and targeted interventions that focus on addressing anti-social and offending behaviours in order to minimise the likelihood of reoffending and further progression into the criminal justice system.

Frequently Asked Questions

Location

Victoria's new youth justice centre will be built west of Werribee, in the vicinity of Cherry Creek. The site is approximately 11km from the Werribee train station. It is approximately 1.5km north east of Little River Road where it joins the Princes Freeway.

Current owner

The site is currently owned by Melbourne Water, but is in the process of being transferred to the Department. The site has been used intermittently for grazing and cropping.

What's on the site at the moment?

The land is mainly vacant grassland. All relevant planning and environmental approvals will be obtained before any construction commences.

Is the centre near the Werribee Refuse Station?

The site is approximately 2km to the west of the Werribee Refuse Station.

Size and cost

The new youth justice centre will take up approximately 25 to 30 hectares, which is well within the 67 hectares available on the new site. There is still significant work to be done on the detailed design and operating model of the new youth justice centre, which will inform the layout and type of buildings within the centre.

How many young people will it accommodate?

It will include 224 beds for remand and sentenced clients, a 12 bed mental health unit and an intensive supervision unit of at least eight beds.

Cost

The government has provided \$288.7 million to build the facility. This cost includes the development of supporting infrastructure such as access road, waste and potable water, gas, electricity and other utilities.

Site selection

Why was the Cherry Creek site chosen?

In response to feedback from the Wyndham community about the original preferred site at Hoppers Lane South, Werribee South, the Government committed to examining alternative locations for the new youth justice centre within Wyndham.

The Cherry Creek site was identified in close collaboration with Wyndham City Council and assessed as suitable based on the same detailed business case criteria applied to the assessment of the Hoppers Lane South site.

The Government has listened to the Wyndham community's concerns about the original preferred location for the new youth justice centre and delivered on a commitment to examine alternative sites within Wyndham.

The alternative site has been assessed as suitable based on the business case criteria and consideration by the Government, Council and other relevant authorities.

What criteria were considered?

The Cherry Creek site was assessed against the same criteria that were used to assess the locations considered as part of the business case process. This includes the size and shape of the land, its proximity to the CBD including court facilities, its accessibility for staff and families, its distance from residential areas and the ability to purchase the land promptly and get started on construction.

When will the original business case be made available? Did you prepare one for the Cherry Creek site?

Because of the sensitive information included in the original business case, which includes details about youth justice stakeholders and commercially sensitive information about land assessment, it is inappropriate to release the detailed business case in full.

An overview of the original business case and additional information about the Cherry Creek site are available at engage.vic.gov.au. This includes the criteria used to assess the initial locations as part of the original business case process, and now the alternative site at Cherry Creek.

Who proposed the Cherry Creek site?

At the first meeting with Wyndham City Council on 14 February 2017, an alternative site within Wyndham was proposed by Council. Following discussions with Melbourne Water, which is the owner of the site, the Government was advised that it was not available or suitable.

Melbourne Water proposed the Cherry Creek site as another alternative site nearby. This site is also owned by Melbourne Water. After further examination in close collaboration with Council, including assessment against the criteria in the business case, this site was determined to be a suitable location for the new youth justice centre.

This site was not included in the registers of surplus Government land when the original business case process was undertaken, which is why it was not considered at that time.

How does the new site compare to the Hoppers Lane South site?

Like the Hoppers Lane South site, the Cherry Creek site meets the business case criteria. Compared to the Hoppers Lane South site, the Cherry Creek site is located further away from high density residential and tourist attractions, and is also significantly larger in size.

How did you find a new site so quickly when the original business case process took months? Did you follow due process?

The time taken to complete the original business case process required the assessment of 16 potential locations, including the Hoppers Lane South site.

The Government expedited this consideration and assessment process in response to the high level of community concern about the original preferred Hoppers Lane South location, and due to the importance of this project.

The Cherry Creek site was put through the same due diligence process as the other locations assessed as part of the original business case process.

Did you consider alternative sites outside of Wyndham? If not, why not?

As part of the original business case process, 16 locations across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria were considered against set criteria, including the Hoppers Lane South, Werribee South location.

Whilst the Government was committed to examining other sites for the new youth justice centre to address community concerns about the Hoppers Lane South site, the original business case process identified that Wyndham was the most suitable municipality for several reasons, including:

- proximity to the Melbourne central business district (CBD)
- central location, ensuring accessibility from other parts of the state for staff and families
- availability of land in the right size and shape
- population growth projections
- access to transport
- access to existing or proposed government and community services.

Why isn't the centre being built in a regional area that needs more jobs and opportunity?

Regional locations were considered as part of the business case process, but were found to be unsuitable given the operational constraints imposed by a location that was distant to support services and harder to access for youth justice staff and young people's families.

[Find out more about the site selection process, including a copy of the Business Case Summary.](#)

Name

What will the new youth justice centre be called?

The working name for the new facility is Cherry Creek. One of the tasks for the Community Advisory Group will be to provide recommendations to the Minister on a name for the facility.

Jobs and property values

Job opportunities

This project will create up to 3000 construction and related jobs, delivering an estimated economic benefit of almost \$420 million for Wyndham City. This centre will also provide opportunities for a range of businesses in the area that can supply goods and services to the centre, to construction teams and – later – to staff and visitors.

It is expected that the new youth justice centre will bring about 450 ongoing jobs to the area, with a range of roles available, including: custodial, administration, psychologists, teachers, cleaners, gardeners and facility managers.

Register an expression of interest

You can register an expression of interest at the Industry Capability Network site to receive updates on work opportunities available during construction.

Head to- <https://gateway.icn.org.au/project/3979/youth-just...>

Property values

The City of Wyndham is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia and it is important to ensure there is economic and employment opportunity in the region.

Property prices in Parkville remain unaffected by the youth justice centre there and homebuyers will continue to be attracted by all that Werribee has to offer, particularly with this boost for jobs in the area.

Will people who have children or relatives in the centre move to the area?

The centre is located in good proximity of transport to make it easy for people to visit the facility.

Construction

The Department is committed to working with, and listening to, the local community in the planning and development of the new Youth Justice Centre.

A Community Advisory Group, featuring representatives from the City of Wyndham Council as well as members of the local community, was established in June 2017 to ensure local input throughout the planning and development stages.

The advisory group will ensure the community is informed and engaged throughout the process.

The Community Advisory Group will inform details about how the design of the facility addresses matters such as traffic management, car parking, lighting, noise impact, visual impact, landscaping, flora and fauna and environmental issues.

Disruptions to the community

As construction will be contained to the site location, it is unlikely to cause any disruption to local communities.

Construction lights

The majority of construction will be during the day. The use of lights for any night construction or site security will be moderate.

Safety and security

The Victorian Government will build a state of the art, secure youth justice centre with fit for purpose infrastructure.

It will be carefully planned to deliver the strong and secure infrastructure that is needed, providing an environment that balances the need for secure behaviour management with the goal of rehabilitating young offenders.

This will be the most secure youth justice centre built in this state. There will be maximum-security external walls and perimeter fencing, with the latest security equipment and technology.

Emergency management

A comprehensive Emergency Management Plan will be developed to outline emergency management processes and procedures. This will include consultation with CFA, Victoria Police, SES, Ambulance Victoria and other emergency services organisations where appropriate.

Visual impacts

A visual impact assessment will be completed as a part of the Youth Justice Facility Plan. The plan will include details about how the design of the facility addresses visual impact and other matters such as traffic management, car parking, noise impact, landscaping, flora and fauna and environmental issues, and any other issues that may affect the surrounding community.

Once operational, how bright will the centre lights be?

During the designing of the facility every option to reduce the visual impact of lighting from the facility whilst meeting operational requirements will be explored where appropriate.

Directional lights and adjustable LED lighting will most likely be used to reduce the illuminance remittance levels and to maintain operational requirements whilst not having an impact on the surroundings.

Will it have similar lighting to what is used at the Werribee Quarry and Werribee Refuse Station?

The lighting technology at the Youth Justice Centre will be different to what is used at the Werribee Quarry and Werribee Refuse Station.

Appropriate consultants will be engaged to ensure any lighting impacts are minimized.

Environmental impacts

The site is indicative of other construction sites in the west of Victoria. It is mostly covered with native grassland of varying quality and is likely to contain a number of other species of plants and animals, including the golden sun moth, spiny rice-flower and the striped legless lizard. The presence or otherwise of these species will be checked by undertaking field surveys as part of the environmental evaluations across the site.

Spiny rice-flower?

A field survey is being conducted by environmental consultants to establish if spiny rice-flower and other species are present.

Golden sun moth

A field survey will be conducted over the 2017-18 summer period to determine if the golden sun moth is present on the site. This will involve systematically searching the site for flying males and the more

sedentary females during the local flight season, which generally occurs from late October to early January.

Striped Legless lizard

A field survey for Striped Legless Lizards is being conducted and will be completed in Spring 2017.

Orange-bellied parrot

There are no previous records of Orange-bellied Parrots on the site, which reflects the lack of coastal saltmarsh vegetation that is typically utilised by this species when over-wintering in Victoria.

Is the centre located on wetlands protected by the Ramsar Convention?

The land on which the new Youth Justice Centre is being built does not contain any ecological values typically associated with a Ramsar site such as wetlands, shorelines or important habitat for migratory species.

There is an ephemeral or seasonal wetland to the south of where the centre is being built, known as Paul and Belfrages Swamp. These are not within the portion of land being purchased from Melbourne Water for the new centre, and will not be impacted by the project. Melbourne Water will continue to manage and protect this area.

The project is required to obtain State and Federal environmental approvals prior to construction.

Traffic

A Youth Justice Facility Plan (YJFP) is being developed and will cover a wide range of issues affecting the design and construction of the new centre including traffic management. This will include an assessment of existing traffic usage and projected usage to determine an intersection on Little River Road in consultation with VicRoads.

The plan will include details about how the design of the facility addresses matters such as traffic management, car parking, noise impact, visual impact, landscaping, flora and fauna and environmental issues, and any other issues that may affect the surrounding community.

Access roads

A new road will be constructed to provide access to the centre from Little River Road. This will provide access for all staff, clients and visitors.

Public transport

Options are being explored for transport methods to and from the Werribee Train Station to the new Youth Justice Centre. This will be explored in the Youth Justice Facility Plan as a part of traffic management.

Aboriginal communities

How will the local Aboriginal communities be consulted on the project?

Local Aboriginal communities will be consulted throughout the construction of the centre. A representative from the Aboriginal community will be on the Community Advisory Group to provide advice on the views of local Aboriginal communities to the Department of Justice and Regulation and the government on the project.

Aboriginal heritage values

The Department of Justice and Regulation is working with the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the area, the Wathaurong Aboriginal Corporation, on a heritage assessment of the site. This assessment will then be used to help prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan by a Heritage Adviser in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. The plan will outline measures to be taken before, during and after an activity in order to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage on the site.

Youth Justice Precinct Redevelopment Project

Summary of the business case addendum

The addendum to the Youth Justice Precinct Redevelopment Project Business Case recommends an alternative site for the proposed new youth justice facility.

In February 2017, the Victorian Government announced plans to build a new youth justice facility on a government-owned site on Hoppers Lane South, Werribee South. The announcement indicated that this was the preferred location and that close consultation would be undertaken with the local community about the project.

The Victorian Government met with community representatives and with the Council to discuss the preferred site. During the meeting the Council and the community representatives acknowledged the need for a new youth justice facility, but expressed their concerns with the proposed location at Werribee South. The Victorian Government committed to further working together with Council to examine alternative sites for the youth justice facility within Wyndham City. The Victorian Government has met regularly and extensively with Council since that time.

A review of several alternative sites has been undertaken. A potential alternative site referred to as Cherry Creek, was identified. The site has been assessed against the original site selection criteria used in the business case. The assessment concludes that the alternative site meets the criteria.

The proposed alternative site remains more suitable than other sites considered and rejected as part of the consideration of the original business case.

The site itself is freehold land currently owned by Melbourne Water. Melbourne Water had indicated that the land was not deemed surplus to their needs, which is why it was not identified as part of the original business case investigation. However, Melbourne Water have confirmed their preparedness to transfer the land to the department.

The whole site is approximately 60 hectares and is bordered by an existing quarry and the Wyndham Refuse Disposal Centre to the east, the Melbourne-Geelong railway line to the north, the Princes Freeway to the south and private land (earmarked for a future quarry) to the west. There is also an easement (approximately 30m wide) along the western boundary of the site for a gas pipe line. The site is currently vacant land of which parts are used for grazing and crop cultivation.

Werribee station is approximately 11km away and Little River station is approximately 6km away.

Community engagement

A Community Advisory Group (CAG) will be established as is standard with similar projects. Information sessions for broader community engagement will also be scheduled.

Alternative Location (Cherry Creek)



Victoria's new youth justice facility: Business Case Overview

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Introduction

In February 2017 the Victorian Government announced plans to build a new youth justice facility on a government-owned site at Hoppers Lane South in Werribee South.

This new youth justice facility is an important investment in urgently needed infrastructure. It is part of a significant program of upgrades and improvements to existing infrastructure to ensure the safety of the wider community, youth justice staff and those young people who are in contact with the justice system.

The Youth Justice Precinct Redevelopment Business Case was developed by the Victorian Government to address current infrastructure and capacity issues at the existing Parkville facility. The business case sought to evaluate options to address this issue and recommended an investment in a new youth justice facility located at the preferred site of Hoppers Lane South, Werribee South.

A range of options were carefully assessed as part of the business case process, including redeveloping the existing Parkville facility, building a new facility on a preferred greenfield site and a combination of both these options. After assessment, it was determined that a contemporary standard secure youth justice facility should be built on a greenfield site to replace the existing Parkville facility.

Because of the sensitive information included in the business case, which includes confidential details about youth justice stakeholders and commercially sensitive information about land assessment, it is inappropriate to release the detailed business case in full. Security and design features of construction, if released, could compromise the security of the facility, along with procurement processes that would impact on sensitive commercial dealings.

This document includes information about the considered business case process that was undertaken to determine the preferred site, including the selection criteria against which multiple sites were assessed.

The business case was completed for the purpose of:

- seeking a preferred option for improving youth justice infrastructure including the development of a new facility;
- assessing possible suitable locations for a new facility against a set criteria;
- seeking approval of the funding required to achieve these outcomes.

This important investment in new infrastructure is one of several measures being implemented to overhaul the youth justice system in Victoria to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of staff, young people and the wider community.

Key project drivers and considerations

There has been growing pressure on the youth justice system in recent times. The changing nature of youth crime and the needs of young offenders means it is critical that a new youth justice facility be built as soon as possible. The new youth justice facility must also respond effectively to the changing needs of the youth justice system.

The business case considered a range of strategic interventions to address existing challenges. These can be broadly summarised as:

- **Reducing demand.** Expanding existing diversion strategies including intensive bail support. The Government is already implementing a series of initiatives called the Youth Justice Reform Package.
- **Improving productivity.** Increasing investment in programs offered within youth justice, with the aim of improving offender rehabilitation and reducing the likelihood of re-offending.
- **Improving supply.** Redeveloping existing infrastructure, either on the existing Parkville site or by developing a new site, or by considering a hybrid option.
- **Increasing supply.** This option involved the operation of a new facility on a greenfield site in tandem with the youth justice centre at Parkville.

The business case also detailed reviews of the youth justice system since 2010, when a Victorian Ombudsman's investigation was conducted into conditions at the Melbourne Youth Justice Precinct. The recommendations from these reviews cover the themes of youth justice workforce, infrastructure and the youth justice operating model.

The most recent review considered was a review by Neil Comrie OAM, who was engaged to conduct a review of the riots at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct between 12 and 14 November 2016. Mr Comrie concluded that the precinct is inadequate for its current purpose, with significant shortcomings in design and construction. He concludes that current fortification work at Parkville cannot be regarded as making these units 'fit for purpose' in the longer term.

In a summary of key problems, the three main issues are assessed as:

- Staff and young people are exposed to the risk of harm because Parkville was not designed for today's offender behaviour and operating practices.
- Frequent incidents undermine management's ability to steer young people away from adult crime and a life of social disadvantage.
- Incidents of increasing severity undermine trust in Victoria's youth justice system.

The business case concludes that existing facilities at Parkville do not enable staff to optimally manage detainees and that the need to replace the existing custodial youth justice facilities at Parkville is now critical.

Project timing

After considering the business case, the Government has confirmed funding for the project and gave approval to proceed with the land acquisition for the preferred site.

The timeline for the planning, procurement and delivery of what will be a major investment is estimated to be up to three and a half years. A funding decision made to coincide with the 2017–18 budget cycle provides for the facility to be fully operational in 2020–21.

Due diligence works are now being undertaken with a view to securing the purchase of the preferred site from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. Planning considerations will be a pre-condition for the purchase of the site and the delivery of the project.

Key project drivers and considerations

Policy considerations

There is strong community expectation that the Government oversees a youth justice system that is secure, safe and effective. To achieve this, it is important that the operating model and design of the new facility is informed by best practice to ensure that the facility is secure, ensures the wellbeing of young people and staff, and provides a rehabilitative environment to reduce recidivism.

The operating model and design of the facility will consider recommendations of the Review of Youth Support, Youth Diversion and Youth Justice Programs currently being undertaken by Penny Armytage of KPMG and Professor James Ogloff of Swinburne University of Technology's Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, and discussions with experts from the youth and justice sectors, across Government and with the community.

Changing offender profile

Recent research from the Crime Statistics Agency confirms that, while the overall number of young offenders in Victoria has been decreasing since 2010, there is a very small proportion of young people who are responsible for a disproportionately high number of criminal incidents.

Statistically, 1.6 per cent of young offenders were responsible for 21 per cent of incidents. This means there has been an increase in severe and recidivist offending by some young offenders.

In the rolling 12 months to December 2016, the volume of distinct youth offenders decreased by 2.4 per cent compared with the previous period, however, youth committed a higher number of offences per offender (+11.6 per cent).

The strong diversionary focus of the Victorian criminal justice system means that those young people detained in custody are the most complex and often display challenging behaviours.

Offenders are now presenting with more complex issues such as drug and alcohol dependencies and those in custody are being held for comparatively more violent offences or for increased numbers of offences.

Additionally, there has been an increase in both the number and proportion of young people on remand. On an average day in 2012–13, 22 per cent of the total number of young people in youth justice centres were on remand. In 2015–16 this proportion had increased to 42 per cent.

Remandees are often volatile and unsettled, entering custody straight from their offending.

At Parkville Youth Justice Precinct, the business case examined data which showed the number and proportion of young people on remand began to significantly increase from 2013.

In accordance with current legislation, young people on remand must present to the Children's or Magistrates' Court every 21 days and uncertainty around their length of stay can make it more difficult in comparison to sentenced young people to establish meaningful daily routines.

Table 1.4 Youth Offending Frequency 2014–2016

Number of Incidents Recorded	Unique Offenders		Incidents	
	%	Number	%	Number
1 incident	63.2	7,852	21.5	7,852
2 incidents	14.1	1,752	9.6	3,504
3 to 5 incidents	11.5	1,435	14.5	5,298
6 to 10 incidents	5.7	706	14.5	5,305
11 or more incidents	5.5	687	40.0	14,624
Total	100	12,432	100	36,583

Source: Crime Statistics Agency

Site assessment process

The Victorian Government initially considered a number of sites across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria to assess their suitability for a new youth justice facility. Some sites were eliminated as being unsuitable in the early stages of scoping the business case. Site criteria also had to take into account youth justice statutory obligations under relevant legislation.

Detailed assessment

The business case conducted a detailed assessment of 16 potential locations, including four regional locations, against an initial set of criteria informed by experts from across Government.

Due to the urgency of finding an appropriate response, two 'threshold' criteria were utilised to inform the detailed assessment:

- Proximity to sensitive land uses – preferably not within residential areas (or able to address potential impacts).
- Deliverability – site available immediately, and with single or minimal purchasing transactions.

Regional locations were found to be unsuitable given the operational constraints imposed by a location that was distant to core supporting services and harder to access for youth justice staff and young people's families. This is because there is a statutory obligation on the department to ensure young offenders' prospects of rehabilitation through access to family visits.

Of the sites assessed it was concluded that a site in western or northern Melbourne would perform best in terms of existing employee accessibility.

After assessment of the 16 potential locations against the threshold criteria, two metropolitan sites were assessed as most suitable – Hoppers Lane South, Werribee South and another site in metropolitan Melbourne.

The business case ultimately assessed the other metropolitan site as being less suitable for reasons addressed later in this document (see page 6).

Site selection criteria

Key selection criteria

- Generally outer and greenfield areas.
- 20–25 hectare site size.
- Roughly square (not too narrow) or able to accommodate a suitably proportioned centre footprint in the case of a suggested larger site.
- Close to the existing or future principal public transport network (train stations preferred and/or high frequency bus routes).
- Preferably not within residential areas (or ability to address potential adverse amenity impacts).
- Preferably within employment areas (with uses that limit adverse impact on the 'residential' nature of the facility).
- Ability to provide effective/positive interface to adjoining uses.
- Relatively flat sites with no (or manageable) encumbrances.
- Single or minimal purchasing transactions.

General Functionality

- How well does the option support the delivery of services to offenders?
- How well does the option support the delivery of safe and secure outcomes?
- How flexible is the option in meeting potential future operational pressures including changing offender group and potential increased demand?

Access and Connectivity

- Does the option have enough space to meet operational requirements?
- Is the option well located to access for support services, including family support?
- Does the option provide for active connectivity to broader services?

Externalities

- Are there external agencies that will have a significant impact on the delivery of the option?
- Are locational issues a significant concern for the option development; are local issues likely to be a major concern?
- Is the option likely to have significant regulatory issues to address, is there likely to be planning permit issues?
- How straightforward is delivery and can delivery readily be staged?

Delivery risk

- Is there unknown planning risk?
- Can the development be staged?
- Are there existing or proposed essential services to site?
- Are there any unidentified development risks such as flora and fauna, archaeological, contamination?

Why the preferred site was selected

The Hoppers Lane South site was identified as the preferred location for the new youth justice facility for a number of reasons, including:

- its proximity to the Melbourne central business district (CBD)
- its central location, ensuring accessibility from other parts of the state for staff and families
- the size and shape of the land
- population growth projections
- access to transport
- access to existing or proposed government and community services
- availability to commence development in the short term
- surplus land for further growth if required
- more accessible to a larger proportion of youth justice staff and families of young people.

Environmental impacts were also considered, with a biodiversity assessment being undertaken. The assessment concluded that the Hoppers Lane South site almost entirely consists of introduced flora species and provides habitat for common fauna species, mainly birds. There are no significant flora and fauna species recorded from the study area.

The other metropolitan site was assessed less favourably for a number of reasons, including that there were more encumbrances that would slow down the development process due to it being privately owned by multiple parties, is partially flood prone, and smaller in size.

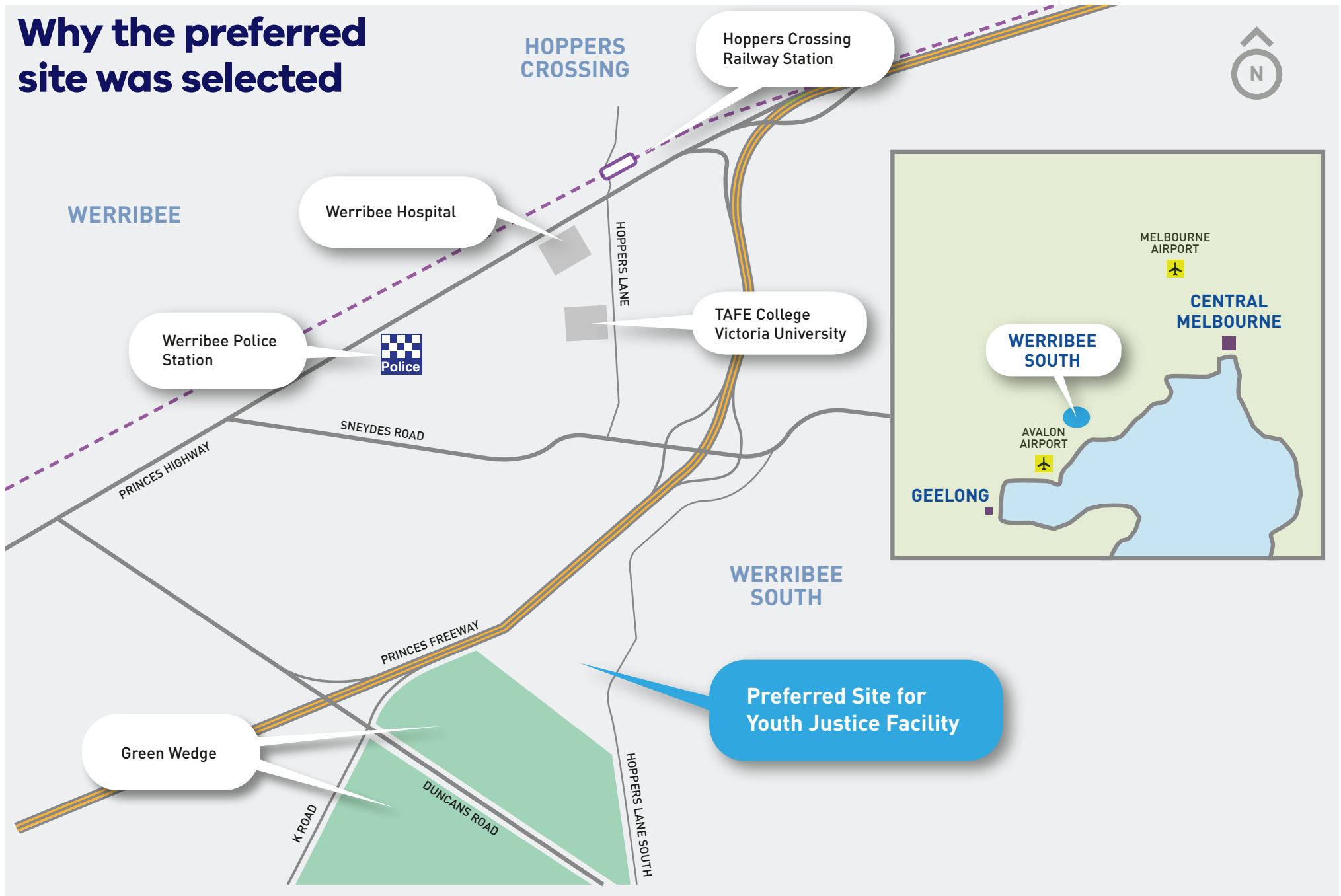
Under current planning policy, the site at Hoppers Lane South is scheduled as Urban Growth Zone and earmarked under structure planning for industrial development.

The large number of jobs the facility will employ during construction and operation will have a positive social impact for the growing Wyndham community.

The new facility represents an investment of more than \$288 million and is expected to create up to 3000 construction and related jobs, delivering an estimated economic benefit of almost \$420 million to the community during the construction phase.

Once it opens, the new facility will bring 450 ongoing jobs to the area, providing opportunities for local businesses. It will also support the development of new infrastructure, including improved public transport.

Why the preferred site was selected



For the latest information about the project, please visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au or call the dedicated Youth Justice Centre Information Line from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday on 1800 630 738.