

CHAPTER 08

STRONG COMMUNITIES



Plan Melbourne Outcome 5:
Melbourne is a city of
inclusive, vibrant and healthy
neighbourhoods

The Eastern Metro Region has many of the key attributes of strong, inclusive and healthy communities. This plan will ensure it continues to do so by providing community services, open space, hospitals, educational and cultural institutions, and transport infrastructure that keeps pace with a projected 390,000 increase in population by 2051.

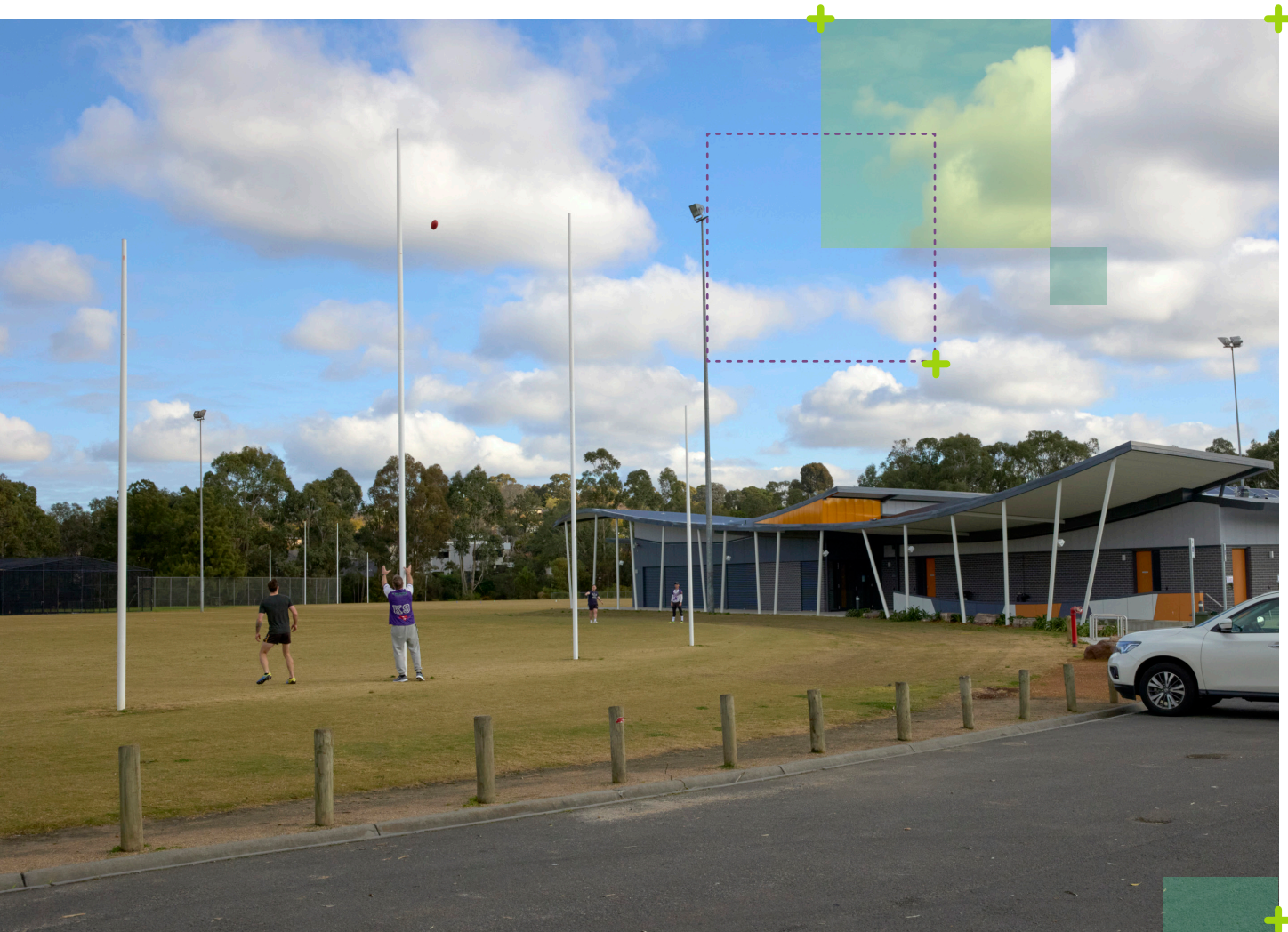
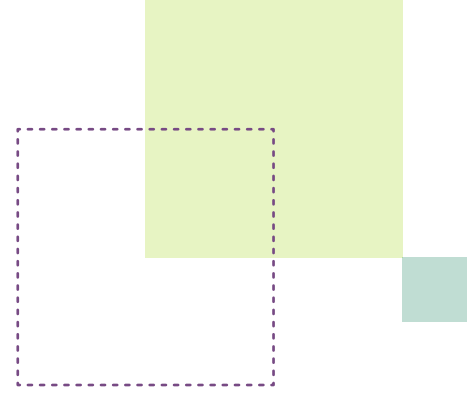


Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio



Taking a regional approach to planning will ensure social infrastructure and open space services the widest possible catchment and cross-section of people. Plan Melbourne aims to build on the fundamentals of strong, healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods by improving access to and provision of amenity, social infrastructure, health and education, open space and the promotion of walking and cycling options.

The Eastern Metro Region is well placed to achieve the Plan Melbourne vision of all key services being accessible within a 20-minute walk, cycle or local transport trip from home. Having easy access to key services reduces social exclusion, improves health and wellbeing, promotes a sense of place, and reduces travel costs and traffic congestion thereby reducing carbon emissions.

State of play

Community profile

The Eastern Metro Region is a culturally diverse community with 35.4 per cent of its population born overseas. This is slightly lower than the overall metropolitan population of 36.5 per cent of people born overseas. Key countries of origin are China, United Kingdom and India, consistent with Greater Melbourne. A strong international student population and established migrant communities, such as the Chinese community centred around Box Hill, contribute to a vibrant community character.

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) ranks LGAs according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The 2016 SEIFA rankings for the Eastern Metro Region are shown in **Figure 21**. Residents of the Eastern Metro Region are clustered around the upper end of the SEIFA spectrum, indicating a greater overall level of socio-economic advantage. In 2016, the Manningham LGA had the lowest level of disadvantage in the region, followed by Whitehorse. The most disadvantaged LGA was Yarra Ranges, and the rural townships within Yarra Ranges are shown to have some of the highest levels of disadvantage in the region.

Health and education facilities

The Eastern Metro Region's high SEIFA ranking can be attributed to its outstanding, state-significant health and education precincts, social infrastructure, parkland and open spaces.

The Eastern Metro Region features 154 government primary schools and 37 government secondary schools (DELWP, 2017). Education is a strength for the Eastern Metro Region with four universities and five TAFE institutions across eight campuses, attracting both regional, national and international students.

The link between health, wellbeing and nature is reflected in many Victorian Government strategies including the *Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023* and *Active Victoria – A Strategic Framework for Sport and Recreation in Victorian 2017–2021*.

The region has a total of 10 public hospitals and 13 private hospitals (excluding private day hospitals). In addition to the health facilities located in precincts listed in **Table 8**, Mulgrave Private Hospital, Jessie McPherson Private Hospital, Melbourne Eastern Private Hospital, Ringwood Private Hospital, Donvale Rehabilitation Hospital, Manningham Private Hospital and Bellbird Private Hospital, are regionally-significant facilities. The region is also well serviced by a network of allied, disability and retail health providers in the region's activity centres.

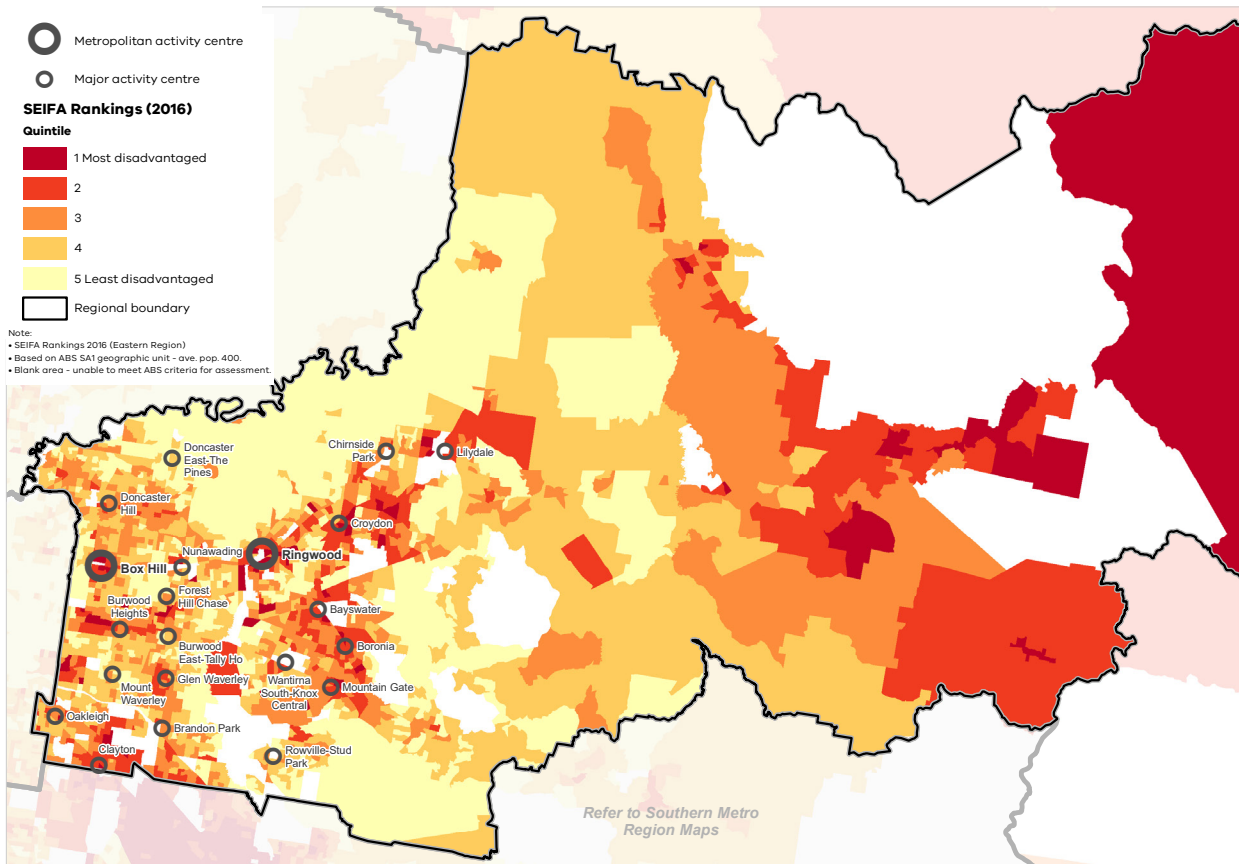
Social infrastructure

The Eastern Metro Region features a network of galleries and art spaces that support community creative and cultural expression including Monash Gallery of Art, Karralyka Centre in Ringwood, Artspace at Realm in Ringwood and Wyneena Community Arts Centre in Croydon among others.

The region is well serviced by recreational facilities. Major recreational facilities include the State Diving Centre in Ringwood and the State Basketball Centre in Vermont South. Other regionally-significant recreation sites represent a variety of sports including aquatics, badminton, golf, netball, basketball, cricket, football and soccer. The regional recreational facilities are identified in **Map 7**.

The Eastern Metro Region also features one Magistrates' Court, three Community Corrections Locations and three Justice Service Centres.

FIGURE 21. SEIFA rankings (2016) in the Eastern Metro Region



Regional strengths

- The region is well serviced by recreation facilities.
- There is an opportunity for the Eastern Metro Region to build on its state- and regionally-significant health and education precincts to keep pace with population growth.
- Use of existing social infrastructure can be expanded and diversified in innovative ways to meet the needs of residents and inter-regional visitors.
- With the region's many activity centres, there is potential to achieve the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Regional challenges

- There is an uneven distribution of primary health, education and community services across the region, particularly in the outer areas and rural townships.

Directions and strategies

The directions identified to achieve the 2050 vision for the Eastern Metro Region in terms of Strong communities and Outcome 5 of Plan Melbourne are:

Direction 20	Plan for major social infrastructure at a regional level
Direction 21	Deliver health and education services in strategic locations
Direction 22	Support a network of activity centres to anchor 20-minute neighbourhoods across the Eastern Metro Region

Each direction is implemented through regionally-specific strategies identified in this LUPP.

Map 7 shows how strong communities will be enhanced across the Eastern Metro Region by 2050 as a result of these directions and strategies, together with Plan Melbourne and other strategies and initiatives as outlined in **Appendix 01**.








Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio

MAP 7. Eastern Metro Region strong communities 2050





Precincts and Activity Centres

-  National employment & innovation cluster (NEIC)^
-  Metropolitan activity centre
-  Major activity centre
-  Health & education precinct (state)
-  Health precinct (state)
-  Education precinct (state)
-  Health precinct (regional)
-  Education precinct (regional)
-  Major recreational facility
-  Regional recreational facility





Transport

-  State-significant road corridor
-  Road network
-  Train station
-  Rail network
-  Strategic Cycling Corridor




Principal Public Transport Network

-  PPTN station
-  PPTN interchange
-  Bus
-  Tram

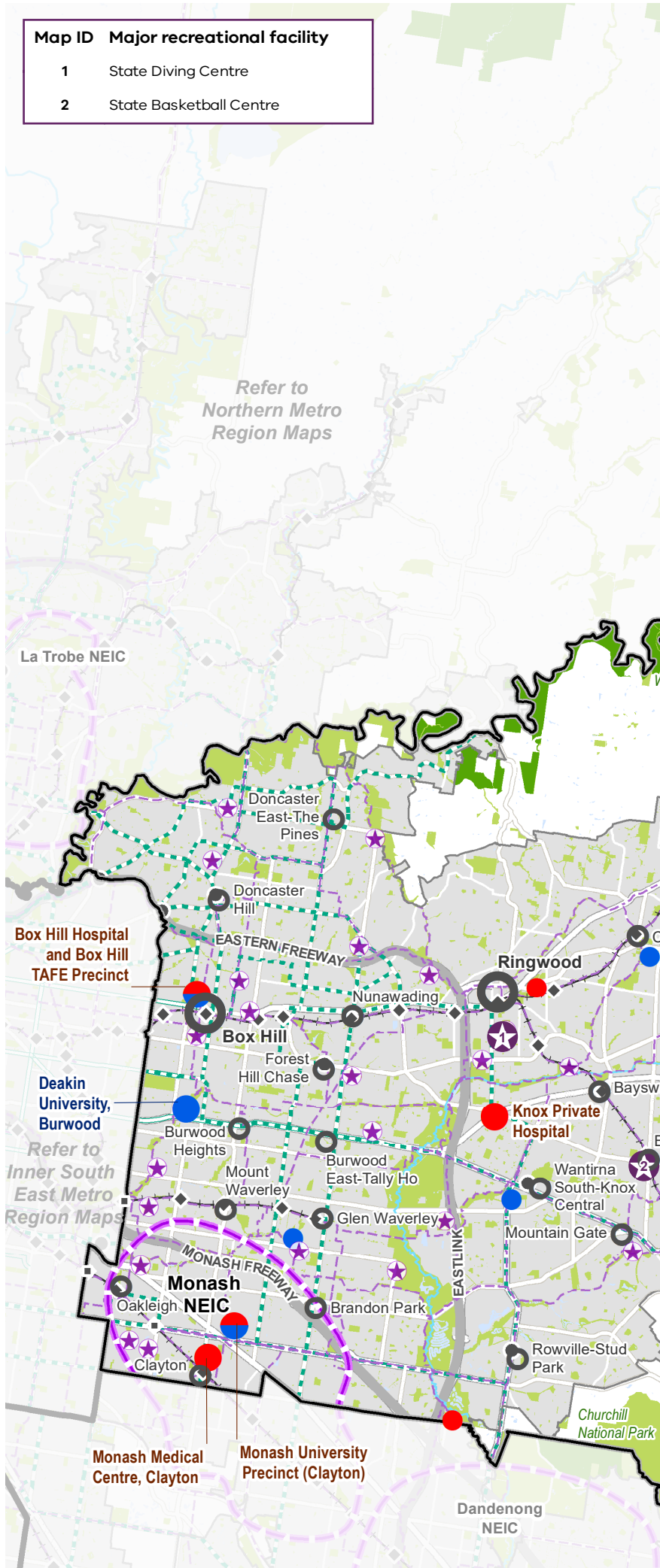
Environment

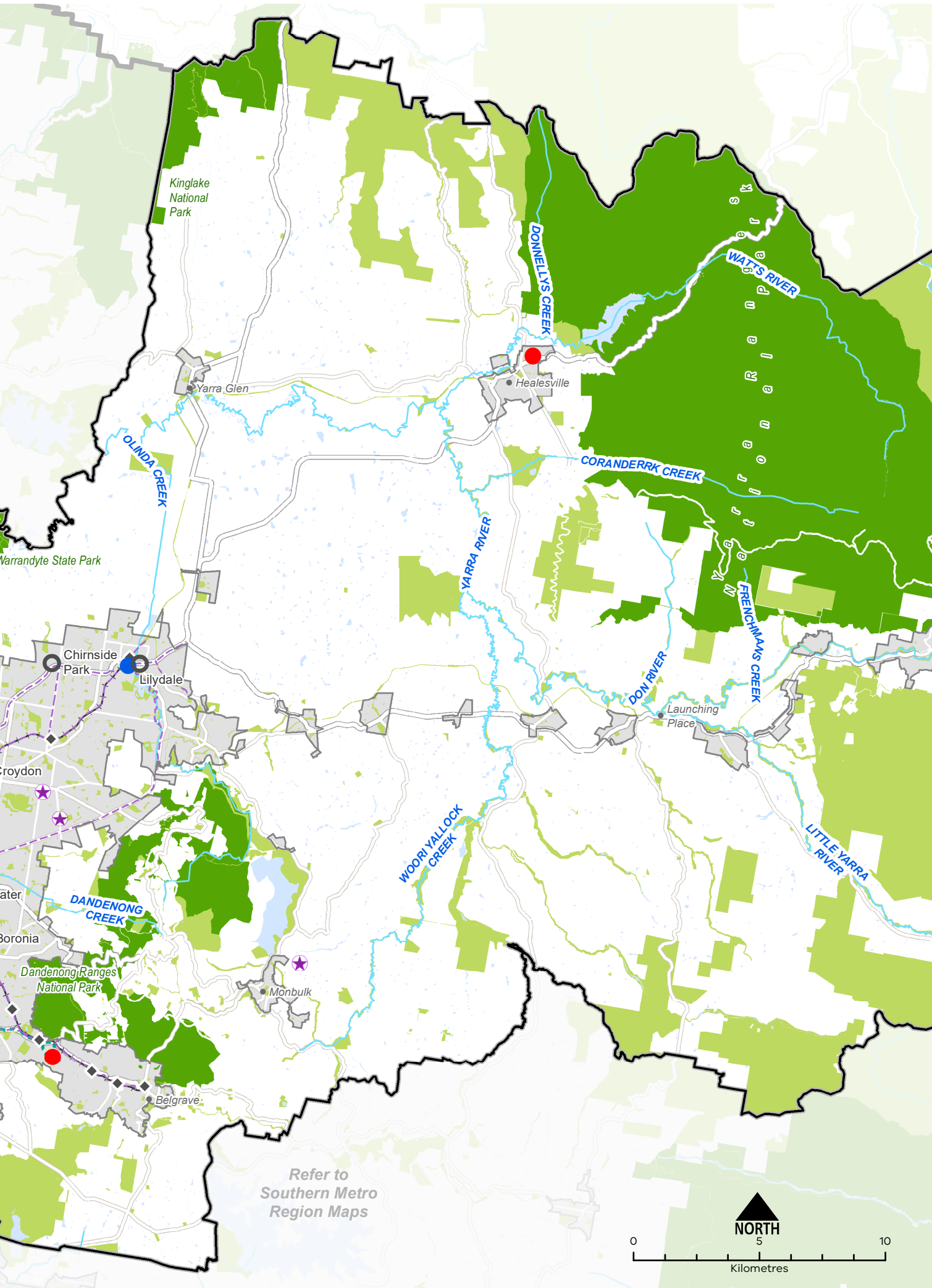
-  National park/state park
-  Public open space
-  Waterway
-  Waterbody

Land use/Administration

-  Regional boundary
-  Urban area
-  Urban Growth Boundary

^NEIC boundary is indicative only and subject to detailed planning.





DIRECTION 20.**Plan for major social infrastructure at a regional level**

Social infrastructure includes all of the facilities, services and networks that help people to meet their social, cultural and community needs, in addition to health and education facilities.

Planning from a regional perspective requires coordination between different levels of government to acknowledge that local councils plan for local infrastructure such as kindergartens, while the Victorian Government plans for state-level services such as schools.

The Eastern Metro Region has a high level of community facilities in comparison to other parts of Melbourne including performing art centres, museums, community halls, aquatic facilities, major outdoor sports grounds and indoor stadiums. However, many of these assets were designed for a single purpose and are unlikely to adequately meet the projected future needs of the community.

The *Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016* identifies current gaps in regional level sport and recreation facilities and provides a planning framework to help prioritise regional projects. With significant competition for land to build new assets, one new approach may be to better use existing social infrastructure on larger open space land holdings (such as golf courses, pipe tracks or easements) and government owned land (such as schools, universities or cemeteries) for complementary passive open space or recreational opportunities.

STRATEGY 58. Encourage planning for major social infrastructure (such as libraries, recreation facilities, cultural centres or community hubs) to be undertaken in conjunction neighbouring regions to maximise co-location of facilities.

STRATEGY 59. Locate social infrastructure near activity centres and in SRL precincts to be accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.

STRATEGY 60. Support regional planning that will provide for a range of sporting and active recreation facilities to meet the needs of the growing population.

STRATEGY 61. Support the upgrade and expansion of existing social infrastructure to enable it to be more flexibly and intensively used.

STRATEGY 62. Encourage utilisation of public land such as school grounds or golf courses for open space, recreation activities or trail connections by providing community access at times and in ways that do not jeopardise their primary purpose.

DIRECTION 21.**Deliver health and education services in strategic locations**

Greater demand is expected for the region's health and education services over the next 30 years given the region's projected population increase and cross-regional movement facilitated by SRL.

To accommodate anticipated demand, existing infrastructure will need to be updated or relocated to health and education precincts that encourage synergies between users. Plan Melbourne identifies state-significant health and/or education precincts. Regionally-significant health and/or education precincts (Table 12) have a regional catchment, are accessible by a range of transport options and have a specialised economic function. This identification provides opportunities for the agglomeration of ancillary health and education services, retail, commercial and accommodation uses.

Victorian Government is working in partnership with Knox LGA to establish an integrated health precinct for Wantirna that includes a new aged care facility and synergies with Knox Private Hospital.

Planning for activity centres and health and education precincts should consider their role as part of the broader network of public and private community service providers. Health infrastructure should be planned at a regional level. For more remote areas of the region, provision of adequate local health services is essential, in addition to transport connections to regional health services.

Additionally, a significant portion of the demand on health and education services could be accommodated through upgrading, expanding and diversifying existing services. Where necessary, outdated services should be identified for redevelopment.

Aged care service capacity should be monitored and planned for to keep pace with the expanding and ageing population in the Eastern Metro Region.

STRATEGY 63. Strengthen the role of the health and/or education precincts of the Eastern Metro Region by co-locating new health and/or education facilities within these precincts and encouraging an agglomeration of ancillary uses such as primary healthcare, retail and accommodation.

STRATEGY 64. Expand the network of health and/or education facilities and precincts across the region to meet the needs of the growing population. Ensure that these facilities and precincts are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

STRATEGY 65. Support the upgrade of existing health and education infrastructure to allow for more intensive use of those services.

TABLE 12. State-significant and regionally-significant health and/or education precincts

STATE-SIGNIFICANT HEALTH PRECINCT	REGIONALLY-SIGNIFICANT HEALTH PRECINCT
Knox Private Hospital Monash Medical Centre	Maroondah Hospital (Ringwood) Healesville Hospital (Healesville) Mulgrave Private Hospital (Mulgrave) Angliss Hospital (Upper Ferntree Gully)
STATE-SIGNIFICANT EDUCATION PRECINCT	REGIONALLY-SIGNIFICANT EDUCATION PRECINCT
Deakin University (Burwood)	Swinburne University of Technology (Wantirna) Swinburne University of Technology (Croydon) Box Hill Institute (Lilydale) Holmesglen Institute of TAFE Waverly Campus (Glen Waverley)
STATE-SIGNIFICANT HEALTH AND EDUCATION PRECINCT	REGIONALLY-SIGNIFICANT HEALTH AND EDUCATION PRECINCT
Monash University Precinct (Clayton – including Victorian Heart Hospital) Box Hill Hospital and Box Hill Institute of TAFE Precinct	



Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio

DIRECTION 22.**Support a network of activity centres to anchor 20-minute neighbourhoods across the Eastern Metro Region**

The 20-minute neighbourhood is about 'living locally' and giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or public transport trip from home.

All Eastern Metro Region LGAs recognise the importance of neighbourhood activity centres in providing convenient, accessible services and generating employment opportunities. They each have programs in place to help neighbourhood activity centres remain economically viable and to enhance the vitality of local streetscapes. The role and function of each neighbourhood activity centre should be understood to ensure an adequate provision of services across the region.

The Eastern Metro Region has the largest number of smaller scale commercial areas or centres in metropolitan Melbourne. The region contains 265 commercial areas that are not classified as a metropolitan or major activity centres. Almost 80 per cent of these are small-scale local commercial areas with less than 10,000 square metres of commercial floorspace. Collectively this network of small centres and neighbourhood activity centres provides a range of retail, hospitality, health and community functions and supports the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks.

Urban design for existing and new activity centres needs to support increased population densities as well as adequately plan for and integrate social infrastructure. Place-based planning for existing and new developments will support the retention of the existing sense of place of centres and provide opportunities for community engagement to ensure a sense of place is retained. This means an emphasis on walkable areas, shared trail links and public transport options to enhance connectivity to neighbourhood activity centres, open spaces, recreation and community facilities. A well planned, safe urban realm would also enable ageing members of the community to remain in their own homes with good access to essential services and facilities.

Townships in the region should also have appropriate residential, commercial, retail, community and recreational facilities.

STRATEGY 66. Plan for existing and new activity centres to embed the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks, through a place-based, community partnership approach.

STRATEGY 67. Support a consistent designation of neighbourhood activity centres and their role in the network of activity centres across the Eastern Metro Region.

STRATEGY 68. Embed the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks in planning within the catchment of major infrastructure projects.

STRATEGY 69. Support the role of neighbourhood activity centres to provide retail, community and allied health services to their respective local catchments.

**ACTIONS –
Strong communities**

ACTION 9. Assess the health services infrastructure in the region's rural locations and prepare a regional response to improving access to services.

ACTION 10. Review local planning policy and provisions for identified regionally-significant health and/or education precincts to support their continued effective operation and their future growth and expansion, including in the case of health precincts, for associated allied health services.

ACTION 11. Develop guidance on a new approach to neighbourhood planning in partnership with local councils of the Eastern Metro Region which embeds the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods.