

# CAULFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023-2033



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*Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land being the Bunurong, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.*

# Chairperson's Foreword

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust is pleased to present a revised and revitalised plan for the management, development, and promotion of the precinct.

This Strategic Management Plan (SMP) builds on the Trust's previous work by articulating a practical and pragmatic strategy to increase activation and improve access at the Reserve.

The plan seeks to address a range of challenges and opportunities that have been identified since the first version was published in 2021. This has included the recent inclusion of the Reserve on the Victorian Heritage Register, a stronger focus on environmental outcomes and addressing the increasing cost of infrastructure.

In many ways, the SMP is the culmination of efforts from the local community and their continued support and input since the Trust was formed to develop a vision and long-term strategy for the Reserve. The community, together with our key stakeholders, have played an invaluable role in allowing us to get to this next evolution of the vision for the precinct.

This Strategic Management Plan identifies how vibrant and inclusive the Reserve will be moving forward, and includes six (6) key precincts:

1. MRC Northern Racing Buildings
2. Racetracks and racing support areas
3. Nature, Arts & Events Precinct (Northern Flat)
4. Sports Fields Precinct (Southern Flat)
5. Indoor Recreation Precinct (Neerim Stables)
6. Recreation Administration Precinct (Western Stables)

Each precinct provides a unique opportunity to support racing, recreation and public park uses while complimenting the other activities across the Reserve.

Our focus in bringing together such a vast array of project initiatives remains true to the vision that we set out in 2020 – to be the centre of community life and create a place for everyone. It is why the Trust is pleased to introduce a new designation for the Reserve – 'Caulfield Commons'.

As we begin our journey towards a new future, I would like to invite you to find your own place within the 'Caulfield Commons' – a place for everyone.

**Sam Almaliki**  
Chairperson

# 1

## Purpose of the Strategic Management Plan

**The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Strategic Management Plan (SMP) provides the vision for the management and development of the Reserve for the next decade that is consistent with the core purposes of the Reserve under the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017. While recognising the significance of racing, this Plan seeks to create vibrant, inclusive accessible and sustainable public spaces for diverse communities and activities.**

The SMP identifies and defines a range of community focussed spaces and associated infrastructure that can be realised through innovative partnerships and projects. It maps out where new places and facilities could be located to ensure the whole Reserve is increasingly activated through appropriately scaled, high-quality built and open space outcomes, while also preserving the cultural heritage significance of the Reserve as established through its inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).

# 2

## About the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve is a State-significant 54-hectare events and recreation space within the City of Glen Eira, approximately 10km south-east of the Melbourne CBD. The Reserve is serviced by excellent public transport, bicycle networks, adjacent to a major university and activity centre.

Established in 1859 as a public reserve for the purposes of racing, recreation and as a public park, the Reserve more recently came under the protection of The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017 which secures the land as a public asset into the future.

With a long history of use as a racecourse, the Reserve is internationally renowned as a premium race event destination and currently hosts 23 major race days a year. Up until December 2021, the Reserve and racecourse was also used for horse training.

The historical significance of the Reserve was recently formalised through the addition of the Reserve to the Victorian Heritage Register and all future development within the Reserve is subject to Heritage Victoria approvals. This plan has been updated to reflect the heritage values that have been defined by Heritage Victoria and these values will continue to guide future development within the Reserve.

The Reserve is located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people and the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust is committed to working with the Bunurong Land Council to ensure that future development of the Reserve incorporates and respects the values of the traditional owners.

# 3

## The Role of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust

In 2018 the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust was established by the State Government of Victoria via the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017, to oversee the planning, development, management, operation, care, promotion and use of the Reserve for racing, recreation and as a public park. The Act also requires the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust to undertake proper financial management of the Reserve. The statutory requirements of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017 and other Government Policies and Directions have been considered in the development of the Strategic Management Plan.

# 4

## The Process for Developing the Strategic Management Plan

A Land Management Plan (LMP) was prepared by the Trust through 2018 to 2021. It provided guidance with the relocation of horse training as a significant change point, and recognised that the benefits delivered to the community will be long-term.

Given the significant changes that have occurred since the initial LMP was completed, the Trust has decided to update the Plan to reflect and respond to the following key areas:

- Heritage requirements associated with inclusion of the Reserve in the Victorian Heritage Register
- Changes to the fiscal environment and rising infrastructure costs
- Community feedback regarding environment and sustainability

This plan builds on other previous work undertaken by the Trust, including community engagement activities, the Issues and Opportunities Paper February 2020, technical background reports, the draft Land Management Plan exhibited in June 2020. It also provides an important opportunity to enhance the balance and integration of the community spaces to provide the best possible outcomes.

The LMP was always acknowledged to be a living document that can evolve and be updated to meet the needs of all stakeholders' and the broader community into the future. This Strategic Management Plan provides the latest update taking into consideration the changes noted above, the current fiscal environment, and extensive further consultation that has been undertaken with community and stakeholders.

# 5

## The Vision for Caulfield Racecourse Reserve

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve is a centre for community life. It is a recreation, park and events destination of State significance. It is also one of the premier thoroughbred racing venues in Australia. It is an accessible, vibrant, flexible and inclusive space within the broader Caulfield precinct.

Welcome to the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve — a place for everyone.

The Trust has established the Vision for the Reserve along with the following guiding principles:

### Accessible and Inclusive

- Safe and attractive entry points encouraging access into and through the Reserve.
- Easy to get to for all ages and abilities.
- Clear and easy to find information.

### Vibrant and Flexible

- Attractive spaces offering a range of experiences including arrival spaces linking people, landscape and amenities.
- Preservation of key spaces and features that contribute to the Reserve's cultural heritage significance.
- All places within the Reserve will promote social interaction and the ability for multiple uses to take place at any one time.

### Innovative and Sustainable

- Creating a climate-resilient public Reserve.
- Leveraging opportunity to deliver public benefits.

# 6

## The Strategic Management Plan

Drawing upon these principles, the Strategic Management Plan will:

- Ensure the Reserve is an accessible, vibrant, flexible and inclusive place.
- Ensure the Plan caters for a wide range of groups and events.
- Provide equitable access for people of all ages, abilities, and background.
- Is developed using research and evidence to underpin decisions.
- Ensure best practice for the planning and development of public land.
- Incorporate environmental sustainability initiatives.
- Be deliverable, financially responsible and achievable.
- Provide the Trust with a sustainable, integrated operating model for the Reserve.
- Ensure the cultural heritage significance of the Reserve is protected and celebrated.

# 7

## Strategic Opportunities

Expanding on the historic use of the site for racing, there are a number of transformative project opportunities for the Reserve. These opportunities will be delivered through partnerships that will create innovative outcomes to ensure wide benefits for stakeholders and the community. The strategic opportunities address identified needs, current challenges and aspirations for the Reserve to become a local and regional destination for many people.

The key strategic themes of the SMP are:

### Access and Movement

Improve existing access points into the Reserve; create a movement network throughout the Reserve that is integrated with its context, safe and accessible.

### Open Space and Recreation

Provide new spaces and amenities for organised and informal or social recreation, including playing surfaces, outdoor and indoor courts, event areas, walking paths and picnic areas.

## Landscape, Environment and Sustainability

Improve the landscape amenity throughout the Reserve to create places for people to connect with nature to enjoy increased biodiversity values and climate-resilient landscapes and facilities.

## Culture, Community and Events

Preserve and celebrate the historic use of the Reserve for racing while creating new event spaces to support community, cultural or sporting events or festivals.

## The Digital Experience

Create the opportunity for integrated digital experience of the Reserve through spaces and digital communication.

## Management

Foster partnerships with shared goals to realise the Reserve vision, and create innovative solutions that deliver diverse community benefits.

### **The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Strategic Management Plan identifies six (6) key precincts –**

1. MRC Northern Racing Buildings
2. Racetracks and racing support areas
3. Nature, Arts & Events Precinct (Northern Flat)
4. Sports Fields Precinct (Southern Flat)
5. Indoor Recreation Precinct (Neerim Stables)
6. Recreation Administration Precinct

Each Precinct provides a unique opportunity to support racing, recreation and public park uses while complimenting the other activities across the Reserve.

To assist the community understanding of access and improve wayfinding, the publicly accessible areas of the Reserve will be referred to as the Caulfield Commons. The Caulfield Commons reflects the sharing of use and space across this public land, meeting different needs at different times, but not “owned” by individuals or groups.

The MRC Northern Racing Buildings Precinct and the back-of-house operational spaces like Maintenance Yards are areas outside of the Commons.





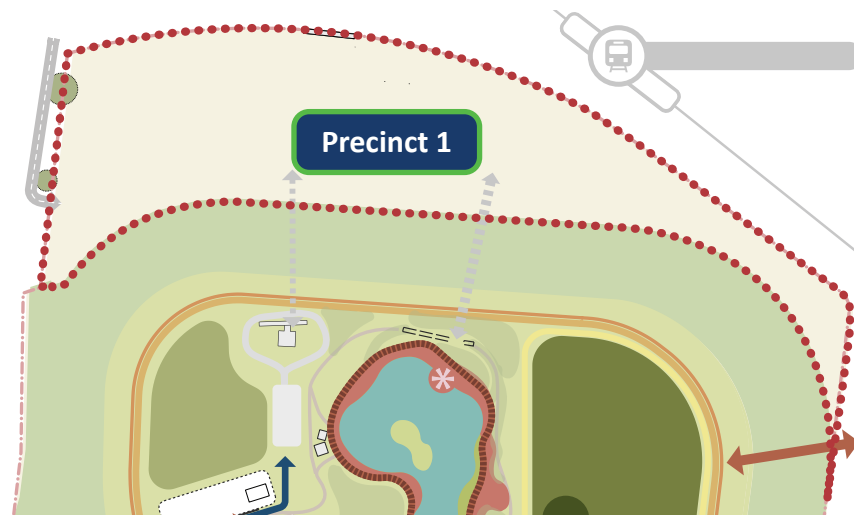
### Precinct 1 – MRC Northern Racing Buildings

This precinct supports the racing activities, including key infrastructure for racing events, and is leased to MRC until 2083. This area is accessible to the public but is predominantly used for MRC’s racing and commercial activities. The Trust will continue to support MRC’s vision, in line with its own, to create an accessible, vibrant, flexible and inclusive space across all areas of the Reserve.

Precincts 1 and 2 are leased under a 65 year agreement and will be developed in accordance with the terms of the lease and MRC vision and masterplan. Provisions within the lease are detailed below and all developments are subject to Landowner Consent (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action), heritage permits and relevant statutory planning approvals from Glen Eira City Council.

Precinct 1 and 2 land use provisions within the lease:

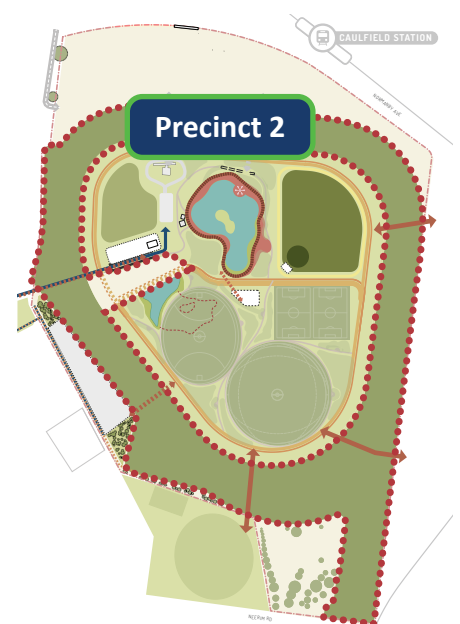
- a) Racing, recreation and a public park;
- b) Car parking for patrons and for commercial use;
- c) Gaming venue;
- d) Telecommunications;
- e) Functions and events; and
- f) All ancillary uses (including administration facilities) in respect of each of the uses specified in paragraphs (a) to (e) above.



### Precinct 2 – Racetracks and racing support areas

This precinct covers the racetracks and other facilities within the Reserve that are required for racing events and activities. Most of this precinct is within the MRC leased area and some are only utilised on race days. Where safe to do so, access is provided to these areas on non-event days and when not under maintenance. Due to the nature of these areas, little change is contemplated and the SMP reflects the existing and future racing operations requirements. This precinct is also leased under a 65 year agreement and is expected to be maintained and improved in line with the MRC vision and masterplan for this area.

In line with the Land Management Plan, and the vision for the whole reserve, this precinct will continue to support MRC’s vision and racing requirements, and support the creation of an accessible, vibrant, flexible and inclusive space across the Reserve.



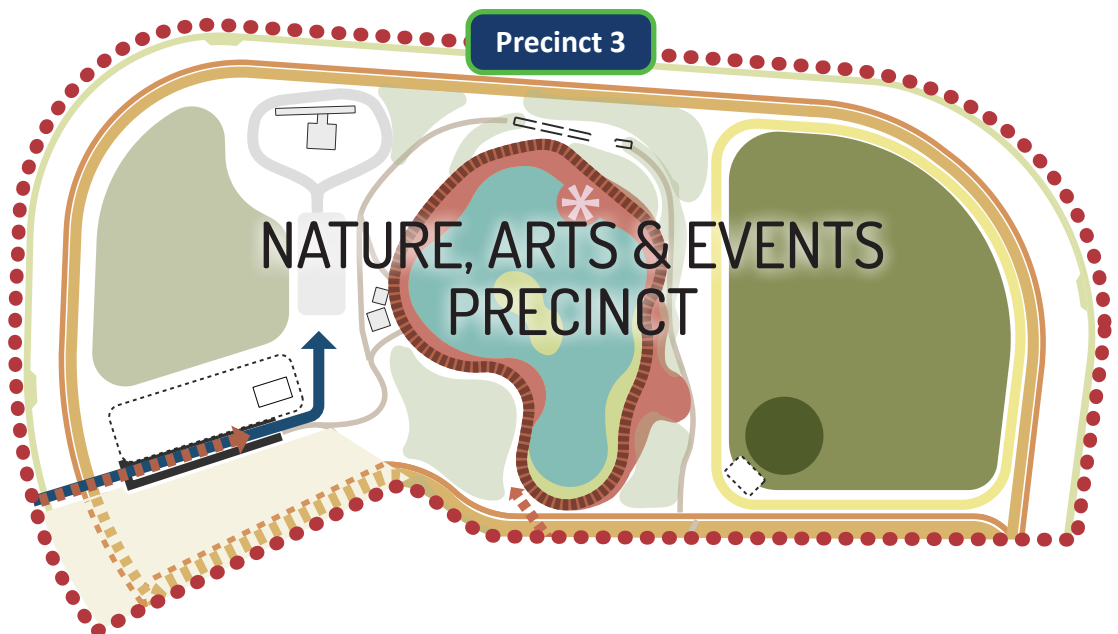
### Precinct 3 - Nature, Arts & Events Precinct (Northern Flat)

This precinct covers the northern half of “The Flat” infield of the racetracks and is accessible on days when there are no racing events. A key feature of this precinct is the Caulfield Flat Lake and Wetlands which the SMP plans to improve with boardwalks, wildlife and wetlands protection, improved facilities for passive recreation and enhanced native garden areas.

The precinct includes two open span spaces on either side of the lake that provide the opportunity for event spaces to be used for public events. The spaces are oriented away from existing nearby residents and the Lake, while also optimising existing public and active transport connections. A series of pathways also provide opportunities for art and sculpture displays, and landscaped areas will ensure this precinct can be used at all times for a variety of activities.

A junior cycling path is proposed around the Eastern Events Area, along with recreational cycling and running tracks around the perimeter of this precinct to avoid crossovers with vehicles and pedestrians as much as possible. The future design and configuration of these paths and tracks will seek to integrate the broad nature of this precinct.

These two open spaces also maintain the existing race day and event parking arrangements.



## Precinct 4 - Sports Fields Precinct (Southern Flat)

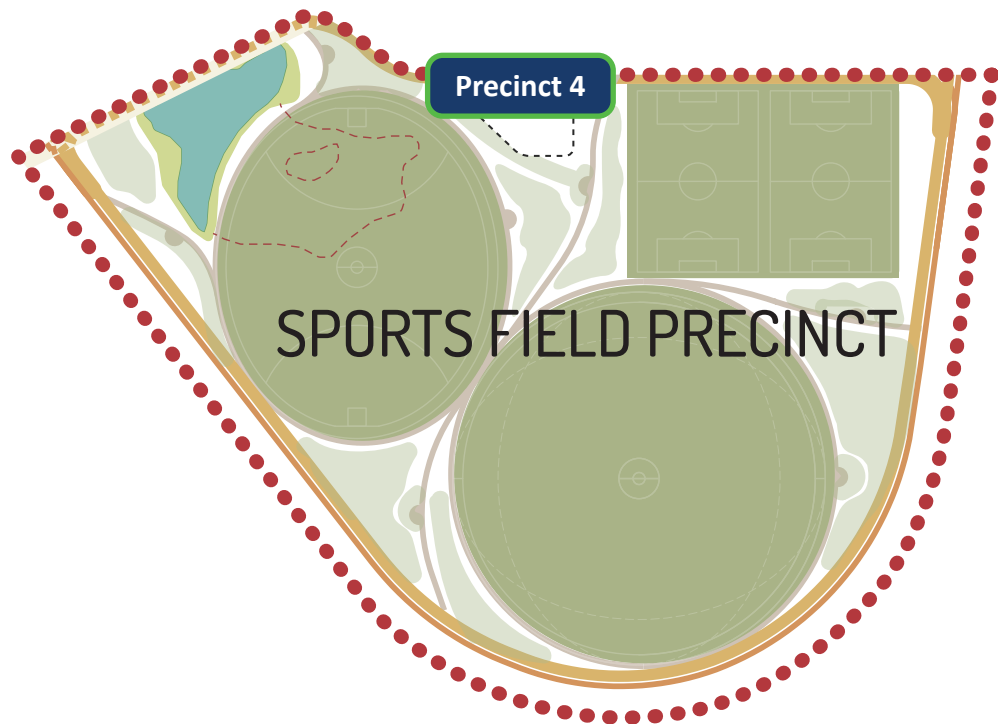
This precinct provides for a range of sports fields of varying sizes and shapes, grouped together in the southern half of “The Flat” infield of the racetracks. These sporting fields seek to provide practical and high quality spaces that can be utilised by a range of sports and is available to all members of the community. To support the environmental goals of the Reserve and Government, all playing surfaces will be natural turf. The variety of fields allows different sports at different times, to maximise the benefit and outcomes.

A formal cycling and running circuit runs around the perimeter of this precinct, while also connecting with the rest of “The Flat” for a larger circuit. The cycling component of this is proposed to meet recreational, training and formal criterium requirements.

A single level pavilion for amenities is provided centrally as a shared area to service the operational needs of the fields for training and playing only, while meeting heritage requirements and retaining racing sightlines. Additional non- training or playing support areas for sports will be provided in Precinct 6. The pavilion will also support cycling and general park users with amenities and a variety of informal recreation areas will also be provided around the precinct. Additional infrastructure associated with the sports fields will be kept to a minimum to maintain the open spatial and landscape characteristics of this area.

This area has restricted access due to racing and other events resulting in potentially 60 days or more per annum where no access will be possible. This plan aims to maximise the usage to support sports, clubs, and other user groups by making these fields available for training and competition where extra facilities are required, including during ground refurbishments elsewhere, visiting teams, special training or competitions, etc. The existing irrigation dam (Southern Lake) will be retained but may require reconfiguration to accommodate the included facilities and infrastructure. Any changes to the Southern Dam will be subject to planning, lessee and heritage approvals as part of detailed design process for this precinct. The Southern Dam was created in 1997 as part of a major upgrade of the race track and irrigation system.

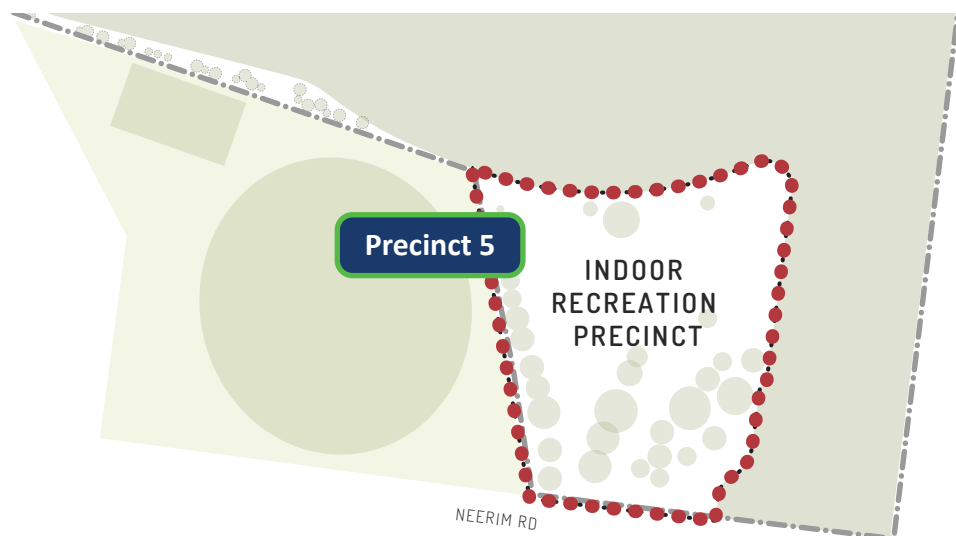
In terms of specific heritage requirements, the approach for new works or changes within Precinct 3 (northern Flat) and Precinct 4 (Southern Flat) should seek to retain the open spatial and landscape characteristics of the area known as the ‘the Flat’, ensuring that aesthetic heritage values of the Reserve and setting of the Racecourse more broadly are preserved.



### Precinct 5 - Indoor Recreation Precinct (Neerim Stables)

This precinct is based at the former “Neerim Stables” site at the southern end of the Reserve, adjoining Glenhuntly Park. This precinct has unrestricted access and can operate independently of events within the Reserve, including racing, and therefore provides a unique opportunity to provide recreation facilities for regular and consistent use. The existing Land Management Plan proposals for this area remain unchanged and will continue to be developed. However, due to the unique nature of this Precinct outside of the racing impacts, and the removal of the proposed “Neerim Road Tunnel” due to cost/benefit reasons, a strong focus is to house facilities unrelated to the racecourse area and in-field operations.

It is noted that this precinct contains a number of mature trees that will need to be considered prior to any development commencing.



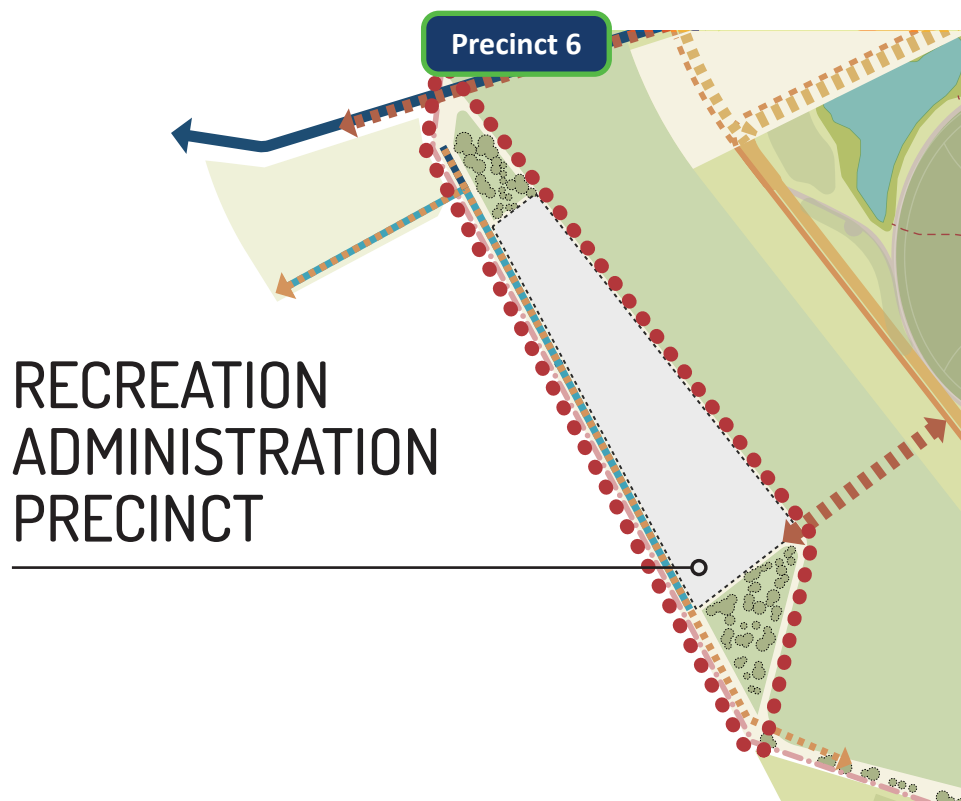
## Precinct 6 - Recreation Support Precinct

This precinct is located outside the racetrack area on a triangular shaped site that was previously used for horse training. This precinct is “wedged” between the racetrack and private land on Booran Road, with limited access and constrained interfaces. While not directly impacted by racing, the activities and access to this precinct will be impacted by people and traffic movements.

This precinct also abuts existing and future built form areas, including the three-storey Glen Eira College and a number of sites subject to future planning applications. This existing and future built form is likely to create overshadowing, constrain access and make it unsuitable for open space community infrastructure.

To support the heritage goals, particularly the aim to keep The Flat infield of the racecourse open, along with the existing built form on site and adjacent sites, this precinct is proposed to house support buildings for the operations and management of the Reserve. This will include Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust, recreation and sport organisations using the Reserve, and other related bodies who require administration and support facilities relating to the activities in the Reserve.

As this is one of the few areas within the Reserve that is outside the sightline constraints for racing, two large areas at each end of this Precinct are proposed for tall, indigenous urban forests. These will also provide screening for potential future development of private land on the western perimeter of the Reserve, and balance any built form in this Precinct.





CYCLING TRACK  
WALKING/RUNNING TRACK  
CAFE & COMMUNITY GARDEN  
- EXISTING TRAINERS TOWER

URBAN FOREST  
RECREATION ADMINISTRATION PRECINCT  
MRC FREEHOLD LAND  
URBAN FOREST

NAVIGATION

- Caulfield Racecourse Reserve
- Open space
- Existing trees
- Urban forest

BUILT FORM

- Proposed building
- Existing building

RECREATION

- Turf playing surfaces
- Racetracks
- Cycling track
- Walking/running track
- Walking and cycling path subject to lessee approval
- Sculpture and art walk

ACCESS

- Existing**
  - Existing vehicular/cyclist/pedestrian tunnel
  - Existing pedestrian/cyclist tunnel
  - Existing pedestrian access (across track)
- Proposed**
  - Pedestrian access (across track)
  - Shared pedestrian/vehicular access
  - Existing MRC members tunnel

0 25 50 100 200m  
SCALE 1:2000 @A1



# 8

## What the SMP Delivers for Stakeholders

Positive outcomes that can be achieved under this SMP include:

- ✓ Maintains and delivers key existing LMP components
- ✓ Incorporates feedback including retention of southern dam and no synthetic sport surfaces
- ✓ Achieves a balanced mix of outcomes for community at a significantly reduced cost
- ✓ Balances usability and access with racing requirements
- ✓ Delivers sport, events, art, park, plantings, racing and recreation
- ✓ Utilises external land for built form, reducing impacts on open space
- ✓ No longer requires an additional “Neerim Tunnel”
- ✓ Provides for existing MRC car parking rights and ease of use
- ✓ Improves safety of Lake
- ✓ Improves environmental protection of birds and plant life associated with the Lake
- ✓ Enhances safety and amenity, as well as protecting flora with vehicle access restrictions
- ✓ Provides safe walking, jogging and cycling spaces
- ✓ Secures community infrastructure through shared use to meet broad demand
- ✓ Maximises utilisation with multi-use spaces that are adaptable over time
- ✓ Places community garden in a safer area with passive surveillance, and better amenity
- ✓ Enables planting of large indigenous trees outside of racetrack areas
- ✓ New built form external to racetrack in keeping with the existing and adjacent built areas
- ✓ Maintains racing sightlines and heritage retention of “The Flat” open space
- ✓ Complies with existing Reserve allowed uses
- ✓ Includes services and facilities close to the centre, reducing costs and duplication
- ✓ Reduces event impacts on locals
- ✓ Existing parking retained with no additional hard surface or underground parking
- ✓ Public transport arrivals to event space are improved loading from the north
- ✓ Adopts public and active transport as the primary and preferred transport modes
- ✓ Supports Governments environmental commitments



Additional opportunities to be explored during the development of concepts include:

- ✧ Event stage can double as large screen for showing special events and potentially moonlight cinemas, as well as community events from the Astronomical Society
- ✧ Digital experience of sound and lights to be investigated to activate and provide wayfinding throughout the Reserve
- ✧ Provides for stakeholder-lead model to develop each Precinct separately and independently of other Precincts, whilst considering impacts on each
- ✧ Precincts can be developed as joint projects which may generate positive economic and social outcomes
- ✧ Provides for a vibrant, consistent, activated area across the whole reserve improving amenity, safety and use, while individualising precincts based on needs and feedback
- ✧ “Outer Trail” for running and cycling outside of the Reserve perimeter will continue to be explored but is dependent on Council and external stakeholders
- ✧ Indigenous cultural heritage can be incorporated with input from local groups
- ✧ Innovative projects that contribute to broader social and economic objectives, eg. use of air rights, social ventures, etc

Some outcomes that have not been able to be achieved under this SMP include -

- ✗ Large scale vegetation plantings across the Reserve due to sightline requirements for racing and the heritage aim of maintaining The Flat as an open area.
- ✗ Recreation activities requiring synthetic surfaces with the aim to set high environmental standards and recognising the Reserve is predominantly turf currently so any change will set back the achievement of mandatory targets.
- ✗ Final cycling and running paths are uncertain due to racing components and final infrastructure.
- ✗ Dedicated access and commitment of availability for regular activity to The Flat infield cannot be assured due to event declarations, providing only shared access for set periods

# 9

## What Will Success Look Like?

Central to the SMP is the vision established by the Trust to create ‘a place for everyone’ within the context of racing, recreation and public park. Through the aspirations outlined within the SMP, the Reserve will be transformed over time to improve both the amenity and the accessibility across the Reserve.

### **Diverse uses, diverse events**

The ability to attract people to visit throughout the year for a broad range of exciting and stimulating cultural or sporting events, while continuing to provide a place for quiet and informal recreation within the landscapes and gardens, walking paths, and wetlands will be indicative of a successful Plan.

### **Community places and destinations**

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve will demonstrate how improvements and additions to both landscape and recreational amenities will provide places and opportunities for community connections for a wide range of people of all ages and all abilities, within local and regional, existing and emerging communities.

### **Preserving and enhancing the racing and event experience**

Success will be measured by the Reserve’s ability to not only continue to offer world-class racing events but to create a place that enhances the racing experience, including the quality of access to the Reserve. The renewal and ongoing improvements to the race experience are planned to protect the international significance of Caulfield Racecourse.

### **Sustainable, resilient and innovative**

Both flexible and resilient, the focus of the Reserve will evolve dynamically, based on emerging trends and contexts, continually adapting to meet changing needs of the community and the environment. Long-term outcomes will be underpinned by a framework of financial, social and environmental sustainability.

### **Successful partnerships delivering shared benefits**

The SMP aims to facilitate successful partnerships to deliver project outcomes within the Reserve which yield the maximum benefits to the local and regional communities. Projects will align with the vision and principles of the SMP.

# 10

## Next Steps

The Strategic Management Plan provides the vision for the future of the Reserve and will be used to inform and guide the development of precincts and future infrastructure within the Reserve. The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust will continue to work with stakeholders, partners and community to bring these exciting opportunities to life.

All actions and proposals within the Strategic Management Plan are subject to approvals and funding in the future. This includes gaining relevant approvals and consents from the landowner (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action), tenants, Glen Eira City Council, Heritage Victoria and referral authorities.

