



THE ROYAL PARK MASTERPLAN

FOREWORD

Royal Park is one of Melbourne's most precious assets. The 1984 Royal Park Master Plan and 1987 Landscape Development Plan provided vision for the protection and enhancement of the native landscape qualities of the Park. As over ten years have passed since the Master Plan was adopted, Council has revised this plan to take account of changed circumstances, new or outstanding issues, and new opportunities to better achieve the original aims of the Plan.

The recommendations in this updated Master Plan are consistent with the 1984 Master Plan. Council, through its Planning, Development and Environment Committee established the review process and a Project Committee co-chaired by Councillors Lorna Hannan and Rosemary Stott in 1996 to assist this process. The review commenced with a program of research and consultation with many groups and organisations that have an interest in Royal Park. An Issues Paper was published in April 1997 and over 70 people and organisations provided responses through verbal and written submissions. In addition, 550 people were interviewed as part of a market research project.

A consultant team, led by Chris Dance Land Design, was engaged to work with the Committee and Council to formulate a revised Master Plan. The team also included:

Jeavons & Jeavons (recreation planners) Andrew O'Brien & Associates (traffic engineers) Ecology Australia (flora and fauna consultants) The draft revised Master Plan was released for public comment in August, 1997 and over 80 submissions were received in response. All submissions were considered in the preparation of this Master Plan.

Council appreciates and acknowledges the contribution of over 900 people in this review process and in particular, the role of the Project Committee in facilitating the process. Their input has enabled the preparation of this Plan, which sets out the future vision for Royal Park. When implemented, the Plan will result in an even better park for present and future generations.

This plan was approved by Council at its meeting on 25th November 1997.



City of Melbourne, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following people have contributed to the production of the 1997 Royal Park Master Plan.

Councillors: Rosemary Stott, University Ward, Co-chair Project Committee

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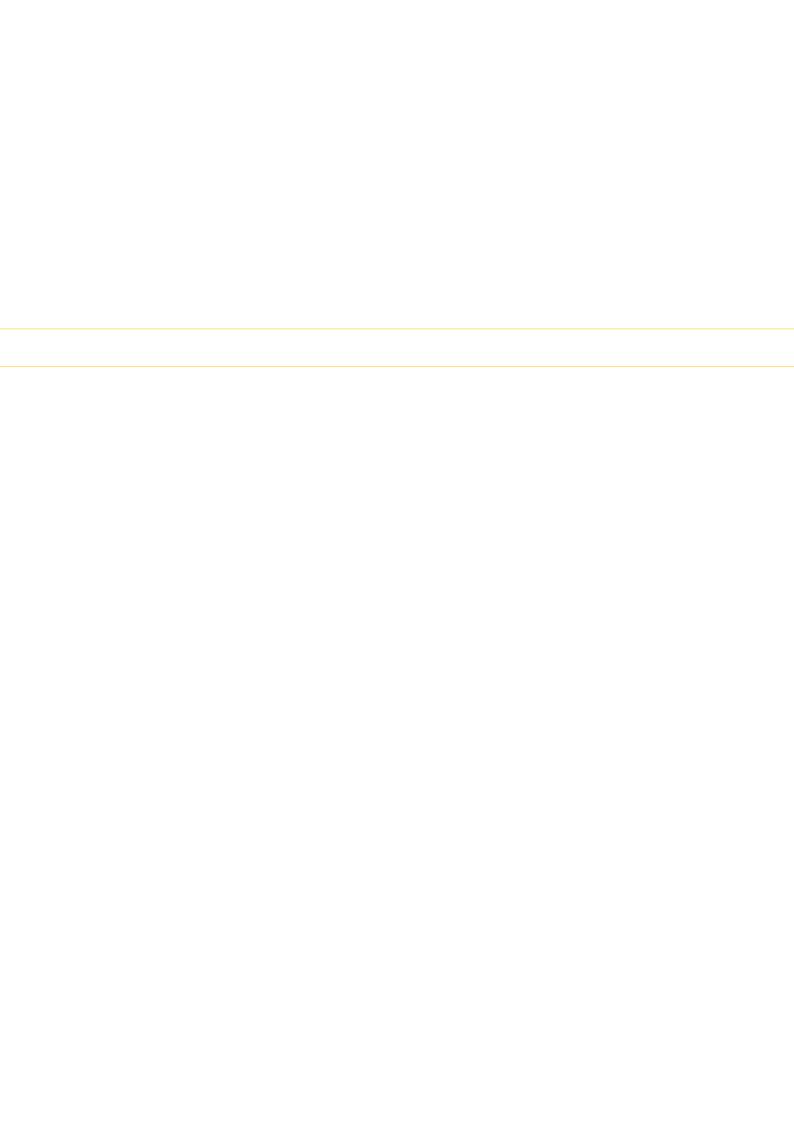
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View to the CBD from Royal Park



INTRODUCTION

STUDY AREA

With 188 hectares, Royal Park is the largest park in the City of Melbourne. Its southern corner lies within two kilometres of the centre of the Central Business District. The Park is bounded by Flemington Road to the south, Manningham Street, Oak Street, CSL Ltd. and North West Hospital to the west, Park Street, Brunswick to the north and The Avenue and Gatehouse Street to the east. Royal Park is Crown Land, permanently reserved for use as a public park, and the City of Melbourne holds responsibility for its management.

The study area includes the full area of Royal Park, as well as

- · a small area of land between Oak Street and the Tullamarine Freeway;
- the small reserves adjacent to Royal Parade at the north and south ends of The Avenue; and
- the former railway reserve between The Avenue and Royal Parade that links through to Princes Park.

The study area does not include the Royal Melbourne Zoo, which, although surrounded by Royal Park, is managed as a separate entity by a statutory board responsible to the State Government.

BACKGROUND - THE MASTER PLAN REVIEW

This report consists of a revised Master Plan that builds on the winning entry from the City of Melbourne's 1984 Royal Park Master Plan Design Competition by Brian Stafford and Ron Jones of Laceworks Landscape Collaborative.

After the design competition, a more detailed landscape Development Plan was prepared with the assistance of a Steering Committee and extensive public consultation extending into 1986. Council adopted the Plan in December 1987, subject to trial and resolution of traffic and car parking issues.

Implementation of the Plan commenced the next financial year and continued sporadically over the following decade. Major works completed in the Park are located in the southern part and around the north and east sides of the Zoo.

The Royal Park Master Plan is now over 10 years old. While in some respects the fruits of the plan are only just beginning to appear, 10 years is beyond the accepted standard for progress reviews of park master plans. Since 1984 some new issues and developments have also arisen that reinforce the need for a review. Some of these changes provide new opportunities to:

- increase the useable area of parkland;
- maintain the existing number of sports facilities in the Park;

- relocate parking from hilltops to less prominent locations;
- demolish a number of unused buildings in the Park;
- rationalise internal road networks.

In 1996, Council's Planning and Development Committee agreed that it was appropriate to re-examine the Master Plan and its implementation, re-affirm the direction of the Plan, address new issues that have emerged since its preparation and respond to opportunities that now exist.

The major components of the review were:

- A Project Committee for the project was established to oversee consultation and provide input to the Review.
- The 1984 Master Plan designers and steering committee were informed and invited to contribute to the Review.
- A comprehensive Issues Paper was prepared and published to provide the public with up-to-date information on the status of the 1984 Master Plan and issues relevant to it.
- An extensive program of consultation and market research was undertaken to give people opportunities to voice their concerns and to provide a statistically valid overview of public perceptions and expectations for use of the Park
- A consultant team was engaged to assist in preparation of the revised Plan, working from the information gained through the consultation process.
- A draft revised Master Plan was prepared and released for public comment.
- Extensive further consultation was then undertaken to gain feedback from the public and stakeholders on the draft Plan.
- Preparation of the final revised Master Plan.

CHANGES TO THE 1984 MASTER PLAN

The aim of the Master Plan Review has been to update the 1984 Master Plan while maintaining its philosophy for Royal Park. The principles of the 1984 Master Plan have been very strongly supported through all stages of the review, particularly in the public response to Council's extensive consultation program. However, a number of changes are required because of changed circumstances, as noted previously.

These changes to the Plan include:

- Updated recommendations in recognition of partial implementation.
- New initiatives in keeping with intent of the 1984 Master Plan but only possible now due to changes in management of the Park and new directions in sports facilities development.
- More explicit recommendations to support use and interpretation of the Park, consistent with objectives for its landscape character.

Recommendations for works outside the Park should be read only as statements of objectives relative to the Park, with their implementation to be addressed in separate planning exercises for those areas.

NEXT STEPS

The completion of this Master Plan stage is the first step toward achieving improvements in the Park. The next steps are the preparation of an Implementation Plan and development of detailed site plans. Funds will be allocated through Council's annual capital works program for individual projects.

Indicative priorities are listed under the Implementation Section of this Report.

Images from the 1984 Royal Park Master Plan









OBJECTIVES OF THE MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan is intended to provide a guide for long-term development of the Park in a way that will:

- evoke the original Australian landscape character of land and space, using
 the important qualities of the Park that are already present. This is to be done
 principally by an editing or clarification of the landscape, rather than by
 further development or addition of new features;
- physically unite the presently separated areas of the Park and establish a circulation system that serves and supports use of the Park, by eliminating or bridging through traffic routes, defining and directing vehicular access and parking, and creating a network of foot and bicycle paths;
- encourage greater use and enjoyment of the Park through balanced provision for different types of recreational activities, ranging from organised involvement in physical sports through to casual, spontaneous and individual uses of public open space;
- ensure other facilities, including the Royal Melbourne Zoo and sporting facilities, complement the objectives of the Royal Park Master Plan;
- respect the cultural and historical heritage of Royal Park in keeping with its landscape objectives.

Associated with these aims are four landscape images that are inherent in the present landscape character of the Park and which direct the physical intent of the design proposals.

They are images of:

- Landform and horizon.
- Sky and wind.
- Expansive grassland.
- Tree form and silhouette.

By use of these images it is intended to develop a park that combines the perceived spaciousness of native landscapes with the functions, details and artifice of urban landscapes. Such a landscape will of necessity be artificial. It will not be an imitation nor a reconstruction of an idealised past, but a novel synthesis that speaks well of the place and those who make it.

Native Garden



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER & PLANTINGS

Royal Park is sparsely planted in comparison with the public gardens and most other parks in Melbourne, resulting from a historic lack of landscape development in combination with relatively harsh conditions. Remnants of indigenous vegetation exist in isolated locations in the Park, but the most conspicuous tree planting probably dates from the 1930's. This included many Sugar Gums and River Red Gums, in keeping with widespread enthusiasm for the use Australian plants in the period after W.W.I and around the Victorian Centenary. Planting in the Park after W.W.II was less consistent.

After adoption of the 1984 Master Plan a new planting program was initiated. This focused on the southern and eastern areas of the Park. The first planting, near Flemington Road, has become established and gives some indication of the intended landscape character for the Park. Most recently, in 1997, over 5,000 trees, many thousand shrubs and ground cover species were planted north and east of the Zoo.

The planting design proposed in the Master Plan continues and extends planting patterns already established in the Park as the basis for the structure and character of the landscape. These include formal tree plantings as street trees and around sports fields, complemented by informal open woodland and grassland.

However, the existing plantings are not intended to merely be imitated and repeated. They should be extended in their distribution and species complexity.

The objectives guiding planting in the Park are to:

- Develop a park landscape analogous to that confronting the first European settlers, by evoking its open, spacious character and typical plant associations of open woodland, grassland and pockets of wetland.
- Use plants that seem natural to the place, without restricting choice to indigenous species. Indigenous plants will predominate, but native species selection should be made on the basis of appropriateness for function, location and the intended landscape character, especially for spatial formation.
- Arrange the planting patterns and select plants according to variations in topography, soil, moisture, aspect and microclimate, where uses do not require otherwise.
- Maintain formal planting patterns and historically important trees in selected locations, to express important Park uses, define and identify key locations, such as entries to the Zoo, and help to integrate the Park landscape with the surrounding cityscape.

- Progressively remove existing inappropriate vegetation that detracts from the intended landscape character or that presents management problems such as weeds.
- Encourage Royal Park's role as part of a wider open space wildlife network.

Recent planting near the North Park tennis courts



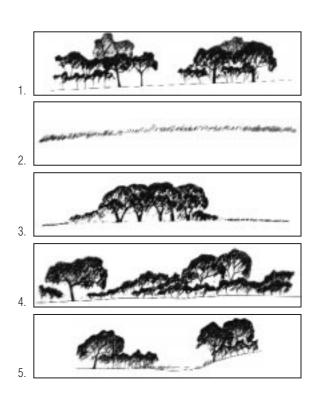
The hilltop north of the Royal Children's Hospital



GENERAL PLANTING SCHEME

The planting design proposed in the adopted 1987 Landscape Development Plan should be continued with no significant change. The major recommendations that apply throughout the Park are:

- The Park should be dominated by naturalistic woodland of indigenous Eucalypts. The mixture of species and density of tree planting should vary, depending primarily on topography and growing conditions. The understorey should also vary, from mown exotic grass, to rough mown grass, to mixed shrubs, ground covers and understorey trees in locations determined by conditions and by practical concerns relating to use, safety, and needs for screening or shelter.
- Hilltops and ridge lines should be generally be kept clear of trees, preserving the sense of spaciousness of the Park and magnifying the views of landform, horizon and sky.
- Allocasuarina verticillata (Drooping She-Oak) and associated understorey
 plants should be sited to close uphill views along ridge lines, especially
 around the perimeter of the open grassland and at the high point of the
 railway cutting overlooking Manningham Street.
- 4. Open woodland on side slopes should be dominated by indigenous eucalyptus and associated species. The density of planting should increase on lower slopes and near drainage ways, especially for associated understorey species. Planting should thin out towards hilltops so as to maintain their sense of openness and retain important vistas, such as of the grassland at the Circle.
- 5. Pockets of wetland vegetation and seasonal water bodies should be created along existing drainage ways. Among these, the pond in the Australian Native Garden should be remade and planted with wetland species. Drainage ways and boggy areas in other parts of the Park should similarly be used to enrich the landscape with plants suited to these conditions.



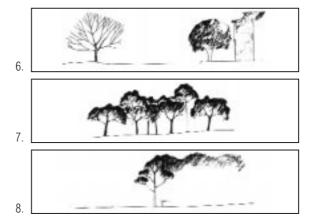
Spotted Gums around sports fields



Redgums near the Native Garden



- Formal avenue tree planting should be maintained adjacent to streets around the Park perimeter, defining the Park edge.
- 7. A 10 metre wide belt of informally distributed Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gum) should bound the perimeter of the Park, moderating between the formal street trees and the inner, informal woodland. A 10 to 15 metre wide grass corridor between the street trees and River Red Gums should preserve visibility into the Park and night time security along the streets, and allow for casual use by joggers.
- 8. At key entrances a few smooth-barked gum trees such as Corymbia citriodora (Lemon Scented Gum) should be planted as 'signs' for the Park (one species per entry) and to allow clear sightlines to the park beyond.
- 9. An informal belt of Eucalyptus cladocalyx (Sugar Gum) should surround the northern and eastern sides of the Zoo, where car parks adjoin the Zoo walls. These should identify the Zoo from outside, define the main pedestrian approaches to Zoo entries, and from within, will give the effect of an enclosing woodland canopy. (Trees within the Zoo on its western side fulfil this role). No other Sugar Gums should be planted in the Park.
- 10. An informal belt of Allocasuarina cunninghamiana (River She-Oak) should be planted to the east of the Hockey and Netball Centre, building upon existing tree character in this area.
- 11. Where the form of major ovals is clearly fixed by earthworks and perimeter fencing, these should also be defined with perimeter planting of Corymbia maculata (Spotted Gum).
- 12. Exotic species should be removed, as appropriate, with the staged development program of specific sites in the Park.



Remnant native vegetation



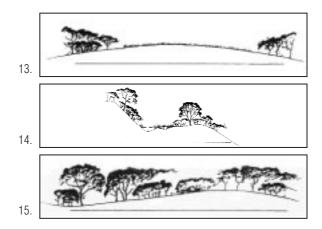
SPECIAL PLANTED FEATURES

In addition to these general planting recommendations that apply throughout the Park, special emphasis should be placed on the development of three major planted features, to enrich the character of the Park, create major attractions for visitors and make significant contributions to habitat for native birds and other animals:

- 13. Open grassland should be established on the hilltop of Royal Park south at the Circle, within the circular pathway with the long-term objective of re-creating native grassland. The short-term priority should be to maintain its sense of openness. Dense woodland should be established to screen the lower levels of the Royal Children's Hospital. The entire area within the circular pathway should be treated consistently, although subtle variations in the species mix would be appropriate in response to variations in soil and drainage. Species should be selected that most suit soil conditions and that allow casual pedestrian access through the area.
- 14. A native wetland should be established in the low-lying area near Manningham Street, using storm water run-off from the Zoo and the run off from the wet surface of the Hockey Centre. This will allow recycling of water for irrigation of golf course greens, sports fields and possible reuse by the Zoo, while also helping to improve the environmental quality of Moonee Ponds Creek.
- 15. An indigenous open woodland should be developed, preserving and extending the remnant indigenous vegetation along the slopes bordering the railway west of Brens Drive. This should include overstorey and understorey trees as well as native grasses and other herbaceous vegetation.

These features also maintain the recommendations of the 1987 Landscape Development Plan, but place greater emphasis on development of a much larger wetland than originally envisaged. Also, more knowledge of the flora and fauna in the Park has indicated a greater significance of the remnant woodland in Royal Park west.

Specific planning, design and management programs should be identified in the Implementation Plan to address each of these major features in detail.



Cycling in the Park



Royal Park Station



Zoo tram going through the Park



ACCESS, CIRCULATION & CAR PARKING

Royal Park is cut into several parcels of land by the Upfield rail line, the West Coburg tramline and a number of roads, including a significant arterial road link.

Car parks of varying standards are scattered through the Park, providing an inconsistent level of service to different park users and detracting from the amenity of many areas. Works over the past decade have rationalised the expanse of car parks. However, the improvement or removal of parking in some areas, especially north and west of the Zoo, has not been addressed and it remains inefficiently organised, with gravel spaces dominating.

The Park is well served by public transport infrastructure, but services are not managed to maximise access to the Park, Zoo and bordering institutions. Consequently, there is pressure for conversion of parkland to car parks. The State Government has determined to retain and improve public transport services (although the Upfield rail service will be disrupted during construction of the City Link project).

These various modes of transport and associated infrastructure have an enormous impact on public use and perception of Royal Park. A major challenge for the future of the Park is to design and manage these services more effectively to serve users of the Park and to support the intended landscape character.

Since 1984, the basis of an extensive network of shared pathways has been established, providing for circulation within the Park and linking with outlying areas. However, several key segments remain incomplete.

Traffic and parking have been the most contentious issues in relation to the 1984 Master Plan, and its approval in 1987 was subject to trial and resolution of traffic management proposals. These issues are complicated, as much traffic in the Park is through traffic and parking pressure results from attractions across a wide area, rather than solely from use of the Park.

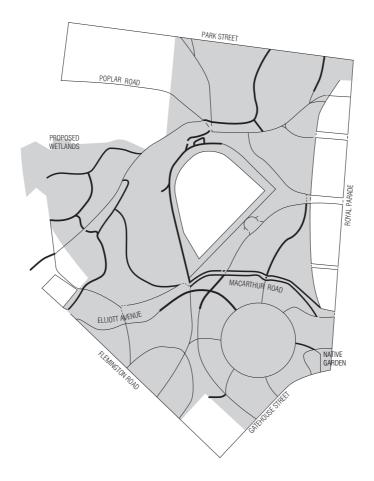
However, the objectives for access, circulation and car parking in the Park have been reaffirmed and are unchanged from those stated in the 1984 Master Plan:

- Enhance accessibility to all Park facilities by minimising the disruptive and divisive effects of through traffic.
- Make access to the Park and movement within it, by car, on foot or by bicycle, an efficient and a pleasant experience.
- Rationalise the number and locations of car parking spaces, while ensuring that Park users who have specific car parking requirements are adequately and efficiently served.
- Ensure that the location and design of roads and car parks supports the intended landscape character without imposing undue costs or loss of efficiency.

ACCESS & CIRCULATION WITHIN THE PARK

The proposals for access and circulation differ in several points of detail from the 1984 Master Plan while aiming to meet the same objectives. The recommendations below list specific works under points of more general policy, aiming to ensure that objectives are not discarded if proposals cannot proceed in the short term or if they must occur in an altered form:

- Access to the Park via public transport should be supported and encouraged with appropriately placed footpaths and by provision of directional signs.
- 17. Improved public transport service to the Park and increased patronage should be encouraged through negotiations with the PTC, major local institutions including the Zoo and Carlton Cricket and Football Club, and with public information campaigns. Increased use at peak attendance times for the Zoo and other facilities near the Park should especially be targeted.
- 18. Major facilities and attractions in the Park should be planned and designed to encourage use of public transport. Specifically:
 - 18.1 The area near the Zoo north entry should be redesigned to provide a high level of amenity for people arriving by train, tram and bus.
 - 18.2 The proposed Netball and Hockey Centre west of the Zoo should be designed with the adjacent tram stop treated as a key arrival point and with good pedestrian access to Royal Park station.
- 19. The network of shared foot and bicycle paths throughout the Park should be completed. To accommodate shared use, these paths should be 2.5 metres wide with asphalt paving.
- On-street bike paths should be provided in keeping with the objectives of the City of Melbourne Bike Plan '97. Key bike paths should be limited to those adopted in the Bike Plan.
- 21. Circulation and access should be assisted with strategically placed directional signs and with maintenance of key vistas across the Park to suggest directions for travel by foot or bicycle.

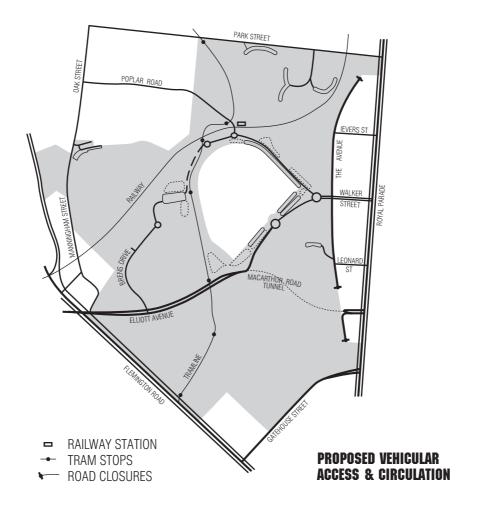


PROPOSED NEW PATHS
EXISTING PATHS TO BE RETAINED

PROPOSED

- 22. Traffic routes across the Park that cannot be closed should be designed and managed to allow convenient and safe crossing for Park users, to minimise visual disruption of the Park and to enhance the experience of travelling through it. Specifically:
 - 22.1 Integrate the treatment of road and rail corridors through the Park with the surrounding landscape.
 - 22.2 Investigate the possibility of crossing the railway line east of Royal Park Station via a footbridge, to improve circulation within the golf course, as well as provide access for other Park users.
 - 22.3 Investigate the construction of "at grade" crossings of the railway adjacent to the former nursery and near the Urban Camp, to connect Royal Park West into the rest of the Park.
 - 22.4 Modify the signalised intersection of Elliott Avenue with Brens Drive, to provide a pedestrian crossing.
 - 22.5 Negotiate with VicRoads and other stakeholders to put Macarthur Road into a tunnel, in keeping with Council's wider transport policy.
 - 22.6 Ensure safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing points at Poplar Road, the railway crossing and Macarthur Road south of Brens Pavilion. A pedestrian refuge should be constructed in the centre of Macarthur Road.
- 23. Other through roads should be closed in the long term, if and when opportunities arise. Specifically:
 - 23.1 While it would be desirable to close Poplar Road, the Zoo and others have expressed concern with this proposal. However, should the area to the west of the Park along Poplar Road be redeveloped in the future, then this closure could be considered. This would then allow the removal of roadway between the railway and the western boundary of the Park and also allow better pedestrian movement between tram, train and the Zoo.
 - 23.2 Investigate the closure of Elliott Avenue between Macarthur Road and the Zoo, if and when the Macarthur Road tunnel is built.
- 24. Where other roads in the Park cannot be closed, they should be placed on relatively low-lying alignments to minimise their visual intrusiveness and should not be located in the midst of functional areas subdividing them. Specifically:

- 24.1 Redirect the unsealed road at the west side of the Zoo that links Poplar Road to the former nursery site. A shared foot and bike path should be built on its current alignment, with the road aligned close to the tramway to serve the new parking area. This road should provide an indirect connection to Brens Drive, to discourage unnecessary through traffic and access could be restricted to peak times only.
- 24.2 Redirect the driveway to Brens Pavilion from Macarthur Road to The Avenue.
- 24.3 Remove the eastern remnant of Poplar Road between The Avenue and the golf course car park.
- 25. Park roads should be designed and managed to discourage unnecessary through traffic, favour Park users over other traffic, maximise public safety and reduce travelling speeds. Specifically:
 - 25.1 Investigate with VicRoads the potential narrowing of the eastbound carriageway of Elliott Avenue between Brens Drive and the tramway. This would provide a transition from two lanes to a single lane in a straight section of the road, rather than on the bend, as now exists, to increase safety.
 - 25.2 Design all roads to minimum standard lane widths.
 - 25.3 Extend the application of the 40 kmh speed limit to cover all remaining roads within the Park, except Elliott Avenue West and Macarthur Road.
 - 25.4 Install traffic calming devices as necessary.
- 26. The area occupied by transport infrastructure should be minimised. Specifically:
 - 26.1 Negotiate with the PTC to transfer railway land not required for transport purposes to the Park, including areas in cuttings and on embankments.
 - 26.2 Reduce excess road widths and incorporate these areas into the Park.
 - 26.3 Allow no road widening in the Park, except within the Macarthur Road tunnel.



CAR PARKING IN THE PARK

A number of changes or developments since preparation of the 1984 Master Plan have required reconsideration of the proposed distribution of parking in the Park. In particular:

- The Zoo decided against construction of a new west entrance, making the proposed car park in that area of little value to the Zoo. The car parks north and east of the Zoo relate directly to its main and north entries and the Zoo has recently completed major improvements of these entrances. The Zoo's proposed function centre entrance and main service gate are also accessed through these car parks.
- The former Council nursery to the west of the Zoo has been closed permanently and the site is available for other uses. This site is unattractive and isolated, due to its position between the railway embankment and Zoo wall, and provides an opportunity to relocate parking from more desirable hilltop areas. Reorganisation of car parking in this area will also complement the State Government's proposed redevelopment of the Hockey and Netball centres.
- The low standard of the Golf Course and Western Oval pavilions, suggest the opportunity for consolidation of back to back facilities at Park Street.
 This would allow complete removal of roads and parking from the hilltop site of the existing golf course car park.

The recommendations for parking, therefore, differ in several points of detail from the 1984 Master Plan, while aiming to meet the same objectives:

- 27. Park use should be adequately served with car parking facilities, by maintaining the approximate existing number of spaces and rationalising their distribution. This existing number does not include the recent use of the nursery site as a temporary overflow car park during the construction of north and east overflow Zoo car park areas.
- 28. The impact of car parks on the character and use of the Park should be minimised by placing them in relatively low-lying sites, maintaining efficient and compact layouts, and restricting the extent of hard paving to areas that accommodate frequent usage, while meeting sporadic peak demands with grassed overflow parking areas.

- Off-street car parks should be consolidated in selected areas, to provide reasonable service to facilities while minimising impacts on the Park. Specifically:
 - 29.1 Retain the existing car parks north and east of the Zoo, as recently constructed (on asphalt and grassed overflow areas).
 - 29.2 Consolidate existing car parks west of the Zoo into a shared parking area north of the Hockey Centre, for the visitors to the Zoo and the Hockey and Netball Centres.
 - 29.3 Rationalise the informal car park near the Zoo's north entrance, to provide a pedestrian gathering space and drop-off/pick up area for coaches. A pocket of overflow car parking to the east of the northern entrance will be developed only if the total number of parking spaces is not increased above the current number in the Park and the number currently available in the vicinity of the Zoo.
 - 29.4 Remove the existing golf course car park and improve the car park at Western Oval as a shared facility. Rationalise the shape of the car park around Western Oval, to provide an efficient and compact layout.
 - 29.5 Retain the car parks around Ryder, Ransford and McAlister Ovals and ensure they are efficiently organised and clearly contained.
 - 29.6 Rationalise the car park at Brens Pavilion, to create a compact and efficient layout in conjunction with the revised access from The Avenue.
 - 29.7 Redevelop the car parking in Royal Park West adjacent to Oak Street in association with the proposed wetlands. This should allow for the removal of much of the road system and car parks north and east of the Ross Straw Field.
 - 29.8 Remove the small existing unsealed car park south of Poplar Road, north of the tramline.
 - 29.9 Remove the existing unsealed car park at the barbecues south of Elliott Avenue near the tramline.
 - 29.10 Remove all parking west of the Urban Camp and north of the existing netball courts.
 - 29.11 Remove the small car park off Gatehouse Street at the Australian Native Garden.
- 30. Car parking in the Park should be subject to an integrated management approach that deals with the entire precinct, including streets around Royal Park and Princes Park. Appropriate measures to favour parking by Park users should be investigated and introduced as possible.





STREETS & ACCESS OUTSIDE THE PARK

Recommendations in the 1984 Master Plan for streetscapes outside the Park have been altered, with the focus now on statements of objectives or concerns relating to the Park. Specific design solutions should be developed in separate planning exercises for adjoining precincts.

- 31. Streets around the Park should be managed to provide attractive and convenient access and to ensure that traffic does not create barriers that discourage use of the Park. Streetscape design and traffic management proposals for these streets should be determined through broader planning exercises for the neighbourhoods around the Park. Streets with particular importance to the Park that should be investigated are:
 - 31.1 Walker Street, which provides the major approach to the Zoo and central eastern areas of the Park.
 - 31.2 Manningham and Oak Streets, which are essential for access to the western part of Royal Park, although the route to this precinct is not direct or apparent.
- 32. On-street parking adjacent to the Park should be managed, to ensure that spaces are available for Park users, by designating spaces for short to medium term parking, especially on weekends and near key arrival points and features. The use of spaces should be monitored and their allocation increased in keeping with demand. The key areas are:
 - 32.1 Near the Australian Native Garden.
 - 32.2 Near the North Park Tennis Club.
 - 32.3 Near the Royal Park Tennis Club.
 - 32.4 Park Street near the proposed new Golf Club/ Western Oval pavilion.
- 33. Road closures or re-alignments, where possible, should consolidate fragmented open space into useable areas and improve pedestrian amenity at key entrances to the Park. Specifically:
 - 33.1 Investigate and consult further with the community regarding the closure of the north end of The Avenue at its intersection with Park Street. This would consolidate the open space, including the reserve between The Avenue and Royal Parade, and create a more attractive entrance to the Park.
 - 33.2 Close the south end of The Avenue at its intersection with Royal Parade to consolidate the open space including the reserve between The Avenue and Royal Parade with Royal Park and create a more attractive entrance to the Australian Native Garden.

- 33.3 Narrow Park Street along its southern side between the railway crossing and Royal Parade, to align the southern carriageway with the existing railway crossing and to add a strip of open space to the Park.
- 34. Off-street links for pedestrians and cyclists should be improved or created to improve access to the Park. Generally these are under the control of authorities other than the City of Melbourne. Key links should:
 - 34.1 Close The Avenue on the north side of its intersection with Macarthur Road.
 - 34.2 Maintain provision for continuous pedestrian and bicycle paths through the parkland created along the former 'Inner Circle' railway, linking Royal Park to Merri Creek.
 - 34.3 Maintain a bicycle path extending northward through Brunswick along the Upfield rail line.
 - 34.4 Ensure that a foot and bicycle connection across Flemington Road to Moonee Ponds Creek is provided as part of the City Link project.
 - 34.5 Negotiate with the City Link Authority and City of Moonee Valley to construct a bicycle and footbridge over the Tullamarine Freeway to Travancore Park

Golf course



SPORTS

Royal Park is widely known for its diverse range of sporting facilities. These include the Victorian Netball and State Hockey Centres, as well as facilities used by local and metropolitan sporting clubs - cricket, golf, tennis, football, rugby league, rugby union, lacrosse, baseball and soccer. Although all facilities are well used, many of the pavilions are in poor condition.

The future provision of sporting facilities in Royal Park should be guided by the following objectives:

- The range of sporting opportunities provided in the Park be complementary to those provided elsewhere in the City of Melbourne.
- A balance be provided between the different types of sporting activities in the Park, ranging from highly organised use of national-standard facilities, competitive sport, through to casual and social games.
- Priority be given to facilities that benefit several visitor groups rather than single uses and, where possible, facilities designed to cater for shared use by related activities to ensure economies of scale.
- Sporting activities be managed to minimise the impact on other Park values and other user groups.

STATE HOCKEY AND NETBALL CENTRES

The Victorian Hockey and Netball Centres form part of the centrally located network of major sporting facilities in Melbourne which are an essential element of Melbourne's reputation as Australia's sports capital. The 1984 Master Plan assumed these facilities would remain in Royal Park, however, both are sub-standard in comparison with other State facilities. The State Government is committed to constructing replacement facilities in Royal Park. Sport and Recreation Victoria, in conjunction with the City of Melbourne, engaged a consultant to determine the feasibility of upgrading these facilities within the Park. With careful siting and in conjunction with the removal of the nursery, it is possible to redevelop both facilities within Royal Park and still achieve a net increase in useable public parkland. Public access to these facilities should be available.

As the Netball Centre currently occupies a prime hill top location within the Park, it is recommended:

35. The State Hockey and Victorian State Netball Centres should be redeveloped on a site adjacent to the tramway west of the Zoo, including the site of the existing Hockey Centre and part of the former nursery. The existing netball stadium should be demolished and the number of outdoor courts reduced, allowing for the reinstatement of parkland or playing fields in the area. The State Hockey Centre should also accommodate Lacrosse, displaced by the proposed wetland development.

- 36. The alignment of the road between Brens Drive and Poplar Avenue west of the Zoo be adjusted to accommodate the new location of these facilities.
- The feasibility of underground car parking, to eliminate the need for surface parking areas at these facilities, should be investigated.
- 38. These facilities and their settings should also promote a focus for many visitors' arriving in the Park. Park roads and car parking, public transport services, information, interpretive services and other amenities such as food services, could be developed in association with these facilities.

GOLF COURSE

The nine-hole golf course is a valuable sporting and recreational resource and is the home of five resident golf clubs. However, the railway and tram lines bisect the golf course and make its layout less than satisfactory. The clubhouse is located across the railway line from most of the fairways and is in poor condition.

The golf course is the largest single sports facility in Royal Park and dominates the northern part of the Park. While it is an informal and generally attractive landscape, it discourages circulation through this area of the Park.

The following works are therefore proposed to improve its operation:

- 39. Investigate the feasibility of a crossing of the railway line east of Royal Park Station, via a footbridge, to improve circulation within the golf course, as well as provide access for other Park users.
- 40. Develop a new clubhouse adjacent to Park Street west of Western Oval if feasible and improves the course, and demolish the existing clubhouse. This should be constructed back-to-back with a new pavilion for Western Oval. It may also provide an appropriate location for public eating facilities. Parking for golfers should be accommodated nearby.
- 41. These changes would require a re-arrangement of the layout of the Golf Course and modification of fairways. This requires further discussion with golf course users and the involvement of specialist consultants, including a professional Golf Course Architect.

Sport



Ryder Pavilion

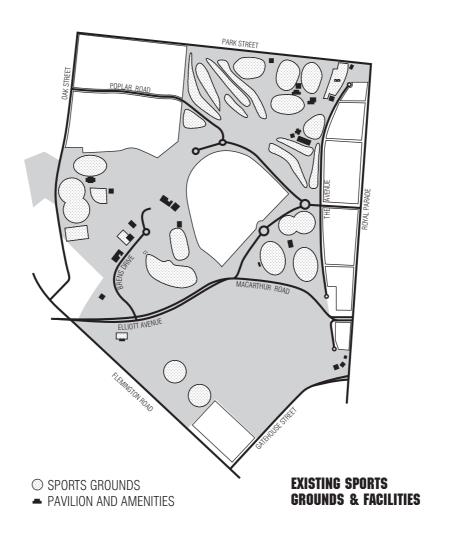


OTHER SPORTS FACILITIES

There is a range of other sporting facilities meeting regional and local demand. Where possible, these should be managed as groups to allow for the sharing of infrastructure. Recommendations for these facilities are:

- 42. Western Oval the current pavilion servicing this oval is of poor standard and it is recommended that it be replaced with a back-toback facility developed in association with the new golf clubhouse.
- 43. Tennis Clubs Two tennis clubs are located in Royal Park North Park (Flemington Road) and Royal Park Tennis Club. The buildings to the south of Royal Park Tennis Club are in poor condition and options for landscaping and/or upgrading this area should be investigated.
- 44. Oak Street Reserve part of this land is temporarily occupied during the City Link construction. It is recommended that this Reserve be re-developed to provide new open fields suitable for sports such as soccer. The area should also accommodate a physical link to the Moonee Ponds Creek, subject to further investigation.
- 45. Pavilions should be retained at the Ransford, Ryder and McAlister Ovals, and Smith and Brens Ovals
- The pavilion east of Ross Straw Field is in poor condition and should be replaced by a pavilion constructed in association with the new wetlands interpretative facility.
- 47. The following design objectives should be applied to all the above:
 - 47.1 Pavilions and other built facilities at site should be upgraded on a single site. All redundant buildings, including those not within one of the sites above, should be demolished.
 - 47.2 The layout of facilities should be organised to ensure efficient use of space and to minimise the barriers to circulation through the Park.
 - 47.3 These facilities should be developed to high standards, but their role as community facilities and opportunities for relatively informal use should be maintained.
 - 47.4 These groups of facilities should be the only areas in the Park where provision is made for separate off-street parking, the night lighting of ovals, and the provision of change rooms or pavilions.

- 47.5 Facilities should be designed and managed to extend their appeal and value to the broader community rather than maintaining an exclusive focus on a single use or select club. However, they should remain focused on supporting sports activities and should not be developed for activities that are inconsistent with objectives for use of the Park.
- 47.6 Detailed site planning and design exercises are required for these facilities.
- 48. A further range of sports grounds should be provided as essentially open public parkland. All areas should retain minimal built features to support use, with no off-street parking or night lighting. These grounds include:
 - The open sports fields south and west of the State Hockey Centre.
 - The two Flemington Road ovals. A small pavilion constructed in conjunction with the existing tram servicing building could be considered.
 - Poplar Oval which has a small existing pavilion.
 - Walker Oval serviced by Brens Pavilion.
 - Manningham Street terrace/lacrosse field
 - McPherson Baseball Field.





Zoo Entrance



RECREATION

Royal Park is an important community asset that appears from survey results to be under-utilised and could benefit from better promotion, catering for many more informal recreation users. It provides the setting for the Royal Melbourne Zoo and, although the Zoo is managed separately, it is in practical terms the major attractor in the Park. Apart from the Zoo and the open landscape, the Park currently provides only a limited number of facilities for passive recreation, such as at the Australian Native Garden, the picnic area near the tram crossing at Elliott Avenue and the small wetland near the North Park Tennis Club (Flemington Road).

The Park also lacks provision of food services that are major draw cards in other parks and add significantly to the enjoyment of parks by visitors.

Public consultation strongly indicated that greater usage of the Park would be encouraged by better facilities, more information on the Park and better signage throughout the Park. It also indicated that information provided through other avenues, such as local papers and appropriate activities arranged within the Park, would also attract more visitors.

The provision of new recreational services and facilities in Royal Park should be quided by the following objectives:

- Encourage public usage and increasing visitor numbers without detracting from the visitor experience or environmental objectives of the Park.
- Provide a range of recreational opportunities that are complementary to those provided elsewhere in the City of Melbourne.
- Improve the relationship between the landscape, facilities, and visitor experiences. Park spaces should enhance particular experiences and recreational facilities should reinforce the landscape character of the Park.
- Manage use to minimise any impact on park values and other user groups.
 Where possible, facilities should be designed to cater for shared use by related activities to achieve economies of scale.

ROYAL MELBOURNE 200

The Zoo is the major central feature of the Park (although managed by an independent Board) and it is one of Victoria's most popular visitor destinations. One of Royal Park's fundamental roles is to provide a setting and access for Zoo visitors.

Key developments proposed by the Zoo that need to be addressed by this review are the recent development of a new entry along the north wall to service the function centre, a possible new entrance to the administrative building north east of the existing main entrance, and the northern entrance re-development.

It is recommended:

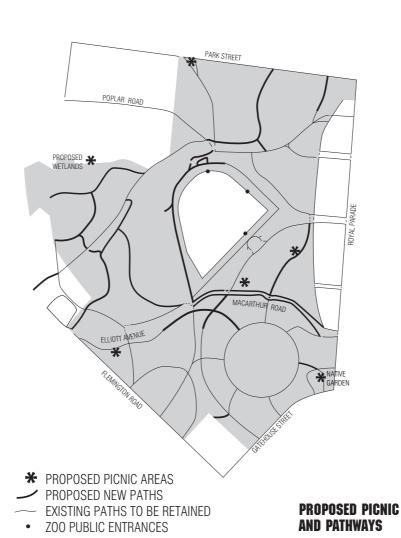
- 49. The area between the Zoo's northern entrance, Royal Park Station and tram stop, be redeveloped with priority given to landscaping, pedestrian movement and access to the Zoo by public transport. This area should also incorporate a bus drop off/pick up point.
- 50. Discussions be undertaken with the Zoo to develop joint information packages to encourage Zoo visitors to use facilities in Royal Park.

WETLANDS

Royal Park West is isolated from the rest of the Park by the railway line to the south and to the north by the institutional precinct. The 1984 Master Plan proposed a wetland be developed in this area. Existing creek geological features and the development of this wildlife corridor would provide a major point of interest for visitors, provide educational opportunities for school groups and allow for greater biological diversity of flora and fauna in the park. It is therefore recommended:

- 51. An extensive wetland system (subject to detailed design) be developed in the former hockey field, extending the creek system into the former nursery site. The wetland system should incorporate islands as safe fauna habitats.
- 52. Associated with this wetland, interpretative and visitor amenities be developed in concert with a pavilion for the Ross Straw Field, incorporating pathways, boardwalks, shelter, picnic facilities, toilets and possibly food services.
- 53. The wetlands be designed to provide water storage from the creek system suitable for recycling as irrigation to playing fields, Golf Course and also the Zoo. if feasible.
- 54. The Zoo and Environment Protection Authority be requested to ensure that the quality of water entering the creek system and wetlands meets appropriate water quality standards.
- 55. Restore the existing tip site west of the railway into parkland, with planting extending the character of the remnant indigenous woodland to the south.





Native Garden, near Gatehouse Street



ENTRANCE SPACES

The Park landscape provides an important recreational asset and attractor for visitors. The open spaces and sweeping vistas of Royal Park have a distinctive character. However, incomplete implementation of the 1984 Master Plan proposals in some areas, especially around the perimeter, has resulted in areas of the landscape lacking detail and interest, with little sense of intimacy or enclosure, except in the Australian Native Garden.

Recommendations for enhancement of the landscape to support greater use are:

- 56. The Australian Native Garden should be extended to Royal Parade, following closure of the southern end of the Avenue. Incorporating the former caretaker's house and small park fronting Royal Parade, this area should provide a strong link to Royal Parade. This would also involve the removal of the small depot, fence and some shrubs, and reviewing the future of the Citipower electrical substation.
- 57. Further investigate a new entrance to the Park at the intersection of Park Street and Royal Parade, following possible closure of the northern end of The Avenue. This would allow the small park east of The Avenue to be re-united with the rest of Royal Park. This area could be enhanced with planting, to provide an ornamental and sheltered space for picnics and other social activities. The design should include investigation of re-development of the former caretaker's house to accommodate Park compatible uses and visitor amenities.
- In order to improve visitor amenity along the Park Street frontage, a new pedestrian entrance should be developed between Ransford and Western Ovals.
- 59. Signage should be improved at all entries (both pedestrian and vehicular), to improve the Park's identity and promote activities. All designs should be in line with Council's Parks and Gardens Signage Strategy, currently being developed.
- 60. The area near the North Park Tennis Club and small pond should be maintained and enhanced as an entry to the Park and as a sheltered setting for passive activities.

VISITOR FACILITIES

Although the Zoo is a major attraction for visitors to the Park, few of these visitors use the Park other than for car parking. Also, vast numbers of people travel through the Park on the Macarthur Road - Elliott Avenue road link. A major challenge is to entice these and other visitors to use and enjoy the Park more fully.

The community consultation provided important feedback on additional facilities that, if provided, would attract more visitors to the Park. These included picnic facilities, barbecues, signs, toilets and playgrounds. It also indicated that the community believes that lighting should be upgraded to improve safety. It is therefore recommended, that in order to encourage visitor use and enhance visitor experience:

- 61. Food services be provided within the Park. Further investigation is required to determine the most viable site but options include the former caretaker's cottage at the Australian Native Garden, associated with the proposed new Golf Club House on Park Street, at the new wetland development or associated with the proposed Hockey and Netball Centres.
- 62. The Australian Native Garden be provided with toilets, shelter, picnic and barbecue facilities. Interpretive information should be provided in association with the existing buildings.
- 63. A picnic area be developed south of the Zoo to the west of Brens Oval. This site should be screened from Elliott Avenue and Macarthur Road by landscaping and planting. This area should be provided with seating, shelter, barbecues and public toilets located close to Elliott Avenue.
- 64. Picnic facilities should be provided near Brens Pavilion.
- 65. As part of the wetlands development a new high standard picnic area be developed with seating, tables, barbecues and planting.
- 66. A picnic area be incorporated into the re-development of the current outdoor netball courts on the top of the hill. This Park high point will become available to be returned to parkland after the development of the new State Netball complex.
- 67. Play and picnic facilities be developed as a neighbourhood park on Park Street near the tramline. A toilet should be provided at the site. The design should be sympathetic to the overall objectives of the Park.

- Playground facilities be investigated in consultation with the Royal Children's Hospital, within or adjacent to the north- eastern corner of the hospital site.
- 69. Further work should be undertaken to identify sites where toilets are required and all toilets should be developed in line with Council's Toilet Strategy.
- 70. The lighting in Royal Park should be progressively replaced in line with Council's Parks and Gardens Lighting Strategy. The Lighting Strategy identifies Royal Park's specific requirements "... after dark, the Park is a landscape of the night where the sky, and maybe the stars, can be seen".
- 71. The lack of shelter within the Park should also be addressed. In addition to shelters provided in some picnic areas, selected sites should be planted (in line with the recommendations in the Landscape Character and Planting Section), to provide a sense of enclosure, protection from the wind and shade in summer.

INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

The use of the Park is limited due to minimal information and interpretive facilities (confirmed by public consultation). It is proposed that a series of low key facilities be provided at strategic sites in the Park. These could include information shelters, single board or signs identifying plantings or other natural or historical features. It is therefore recommended that:

- 72. Information displays, special planting or historical plaques be provided at strategic locations, such as the Australian Native Garden, Burke and Wills memorial, route of the horse drawn tramway, all major pedestrian entry points, pavilions, picnic areas, wetlands etc.
- 73. An arrangement be entered into with the Zoo, the Urban Camp and Hockey/Netball Centres, to provide information on the Park at each of these locations.

ACTIVITIES

Feedback from the activities organised by Council, such as the star gazing night, has indicated that appropriate activities held in the Park are very popular with the community. It is therefore recommended:

74. Appropriate programs or activities are held in the Park and promoted within the Park and through other avenues such as local papers.

Caretakers cottage



OTHER FACILITIES

Historical uses and past management practices have left a number of buildings in the Park that are no longer used or needed. The future retention or demolition and use of these buildings should be guided by the following objectives:

- Redundant buildings of particular architectural or historic significance related to the values of Royal Park should be recycled for new uses that are consistent with or complementary to objectives for use of the Park.
- Where possible, design facilities to cater for shared use. Buildings should be designed to be compatible with the Park environment and, where possible, cater for shared use by a range of park users.

THE URBAN CAMP

The Urban Camp is a non-profit co-operative providing low cost accommodation to school groups, sporting organisations and community groups. The Camp was established in 1984, using Anzac Hall, which is a historic structure remaining from Camp Pell, with some modern annexes containing service areas for the building.

The Camp proposes to redevelop the facility in order to increase the number of beds, flexibility of accommodation and to improve the standard of services within the building.

The proposal includes integration of the building with the parkland by removal of fences and opening up the private yards at the sides and rear of Anzac Hall. It is recommended:

- 75. The Camp should be developed to a high standard and its role as a community facility and opportunities for relatively informal use should be maintained.
- 76. The Camp facilities should be designed and managed to extend its appeal and value to the broader Park user community. It should not be developed to accommodate activities that are inconsistent with objectives for Park use.

PARK MAINTENANCE DEPOTS

As maintenance of the Park is now undertaken by contract, the use and need for depots within the Parks, although reduced, is still essential. It is therefore recommended that:

77. Park maintenance depots and other service facilities should be reduced to the minimum feasible size and consolidated if possible within the site of the redeveloped Netball and Hockey facilities. If this is not possible then further investigation needs to be undertaken. Other existing structures and service enclosures within the Park should be removed.

CARETAKER COTTAGES

The four existing houses are no longer used as caretaker residences. Two are in very poor condition, two others near Royal Parade are of some architectural merit and structurally sound for renovation. It is recommended:

- 78. Use of the caretaker house near the southern intersection of The Avenue and Royal Parade should be investigated. The adjacent depot should be removed and the garden integrated with the Australian Native Garden. Park compatible use of the caretaker house near the intersection of Park Street and Royal Parade should also be investigated.
- 79. The other two caretaker houses are in poor condition or structurally unsound, are poorly located for other uses and should be removed and their sites reinstated as parkland.
 - 79.1 Demolish the caretaker house at Parkville West.
 - 79.2 Demolish the caretaker house at Ryder Oval.

IMPLEMENTATION

The 1997 Royal Park Master Plan reinforces the key directions established by the 1984 Landscape Master Plan and the subsequent 1987 Landscape Development Plan. It outlines the vision for the Park and the overall strategy directions for the future of the Park. Key steps in achieving an improved Park on the ground are outlined in this section.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

An Implementation Plan will be developed, based on the following indicative priorities list. This plan will form a basis for staging works over a number of years and for funding the proposals contained in this Master Plan through the Council's annual capital works program.

INDICATIVE PRIORITIES LISTING

The following proposals, as recommended in the Master Plan, have been identified as priorities for implementation.

General priorities are listed as follows:

- Major revegetation and upgrading of pathway links.
- Develop new visitor facilities, including picnic areas, signage, information and children's play facilities.
- The wetlands including associated boardwalks and interpretive information.
- Redevelopment of northern Zoo area to facilitate public transport access to Zoo.
- Commencement of Golf Course re-development with new Clubhouse, together with the new Western Pavilion.
- Park entries and associated works.
- Complete the Brens Pavilion redevelopment by developing new access from The Avenue, including the new parking area.

These priorities have been formulated with a view to the following criteria:

- Early enrichment of landscape character and ecology.
- Better functioning of the Park.

- Visibility of works.
- Order of cost relative to benefit.
- Encourage usage to enhance the Park's value and strengthen community ownership.
- The unification of the Park's divided parts.
- Likelihood of funding availability.

SITE AND BUILDING PLANS

In line with the recommendations of the Master Plan and Implementation Plan, and as funds become available, detailed site or building plans will be prepared. Many of the proposals (other than planting) will require planning permits under the City of Melbourne Planning Scheme. During consideration of these planning permits, the community will be consulted, giving the stakeholders and the public the opportunity to comment on the detailed design proposals.

PARK IMPROVEMENT/OTHER AGENCIES

In order to complete a number of projects within the Park, negotiations will need to be undertaken with the relevant Government agencies. Specifically:

- Negotiate improved public transport access with the Public Transport Corporation.
- Negotiate undergrounding of Macarthur Road with VicRoads.
- Negotiate with the Public Transport Corporation regarding transfer of surplus railway land for inclusion in the Park.
- Negotiate improvements to water quality in the creek with the Zoo and Environment Protection Authority.
- Negotiate with the City Link Authority and City of Moonee Valley regarding linkage to the Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Investigate extension of the Park to include part of the grounds of the former Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital site.

REFERENCES

During and after preparation of the 1987 Landscape Development Plan, a number of detailed technical reports were commissioned addressing projects and management issues in the Park. These include surveys of flora and fauna, techniques for re-establishment of indigenous grasses, and traffic and parking studies. Many of these are still current and form an important body of reference material. In addition, further studies have been commissioned to support the development of this Master Plan. A list of key references is attached at the end of this report. This report does not attempt to duplicate or provide a comprehensive summary of those studies, and focuses on objectives and recommendations for development of the Park.

The following list is not exhaustive, but covers the key documents supporting the Master Plan Review:

- History of Royal Park. W. A. Sanderson (from Victorian Historical Magazine, Vol. XIV No 3) May 1932 and The Melbourne City Council's Administration of Royal Park 1933-84. City of Melbourne Parks and Gardens Department (?)
- Royal Park Landscape Development Plan. Laceworks Landscape Collaborative, with Maunsell & Partners and Beattie Prowse. November, 1985
- Vegetation of the Brens Drive Site and an Evaluation of Native Grassland Establishment and Management Techniques, Royal Park, City of Melbourne, Victoria. G W Carr and J A Todd, Ecological Horticulture, July 1991
- Vegetation and Management of Royal Park West. G Q Carr and G J Race, Ecological Horticulture with R H M van de Graaff, Van de Graaff & Associates, February 1992
- The Fauna of Royal Park West. R Wallis, D Hochuli, C Kellett, H Brunner.
 Report prepared for the Friends of Royal Park West by the Applied Australian
 Ecological Research Unit. Deakin University. July. 1993
- Royal Park West Manningham Street: Results of the 1996 Weed Control Program. Prepared by Lincoln Kern, Practical Ecology Services. July 1996
- Water Recycling Wetland System (Draft) Royal Park: Environmental Management Systems, July 1996
- Melbourne's Parks and Gardens Lighting Strategy. Paul Laycock & Florence Jaquet with Brian Sadgrove & Associates, November 1996
- City of Melbourne Bike Plan '97. City of Melbourne, February 1997
- Royal Park Master Plan Review: Issues Paper. City of Melbourne, April 1997
- Royal Park Master Plan Review: Issues Paper Consultation Report. City of Melbourne, May 1997

- Royal Park Master Plan Traffic Report (Draft). Andrew O'Brien & Associates, July 1997
- Royal Park Usage Analysis (Draft). Jeavons and Jeavons, July 1997
- Royal Park Traffic Origin-Destination Study (Draft). Connell Wagner, July 1997
- AGB McNair reports on surveys and consultation

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The following people have contributed to the production of the 1997 Royal Park Master Plan.

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Jeavons & Jeavons Ecology Australia Andrew O'Brien & Associates













Royal Park looking from Royal Parade across the Australian Native Garden (existing conditions)



Royal Park looking from Royal Parade across the Australian Native Garden (proposed conditions)

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