Description

The areas of Launching Place, Woori Yallock and Don Valley are predominantly rural, with residential areas in the townships of Launching Place and Woori Yallock. Major open space and recreation features of the area include Woori Yallock Bushland Creek Reserve, Haining Farm and Woori Yallock Recreation Reserve.

Yarra Junction, Millgrove and Wesburn are mainly rural, with residential areas in the three townships. Major open space and recreation features of the area include Yarra Junction Recreation Reserve, Wesburn Park Reserve and Millgrove Recreation Reserve.

Warburton and surrounds is mostly rural, with residential areas in the township of Warburton. Major open space and recreation features of the area include Yarra Ranges National Park, Mount Donna Buang, Yarra State Forest, La-La Falls, Rainforest Gallery Skywalk, Warburton Golf Club, and the Warburton Recreation Reserve.

All townships are linked by the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, the regional off-road trail of the municipality. This trail is supported by the recently constructed O’Shannassy Aqueduct Trail.

What population changes will affect the need for open space and recreation facilities?

The residential population of Launching Place, Woori Yallock and Don Valley is 5,882 people, Yarra Junction, Millgrove and Wesburn is 5,047 people and Warburton is 3,024 people, based on the 2011 Census data. The precinct residential population represents 9% of the total population of Yarra Ranges. The population increased marginally during the 1990s, then declined slightly between 2001 and 2011, a result of little change in dwelling stock and a decline in average household size.

Analysis of the age structure of the precinct in 2011 compared to Yarra Ranges Shire similar proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 to 17) but a larger proportion of people in the older age groups (60+).

Increases in age cohorts were recorded in 50 to 59 years (additional 208 people) and 60 to 69 years (additional 168 people) since 2001. These statistics show an ageing population and it is expected that the older adult age group (60+) will increase and people under 15 years of age decrease in the future.

The precinct’s ageing population places will demand accessible recreation opportunities and facilities in the future.
What future housing developments are planned?

There is continued demand for residential development within Yarra Ranges, catering both for people moving from Melbourne and for new households being formed from within the existing Yarra Ranges community.

The current population for the precinct is 13,953 (Yarra Ranges Community Profile 2011). The projected population in 2031 is 15,307.

Yarra Junction offers the best capability for additional housing, while Woori Yallock is an area of restricted change and Warburton is an area of least change.

What open space do we have?

There is more than 13,981ha of open space in the precinct, which is largely natural bushland area. Parks Victoria owns and manages the natural bushland areas including Yarra Ranges National Park and the O’Shannassy Aqueduct, while Council owns and manages the recreation reserves in the local townships.

Key sports reserves and facilities

Woori Yallock Reserve is a district sports reserve regularly used for football, netball finals. The reserve includes a sports field, tennis courts, netball courts and Scouts Hall. The sports field lighting has recently been upgraded to provide for competition Australian Rules football. The venue is also an Emergency Response Marshalling Point for Yarra Ranges Council and Victoria Police.

Wickhams Road Recreation Reserve is a local sports reserve with sports field and tennis courts in Launching Place. The reserve is currently underutilised and there is an opportunity to develop the site as an alternative training ground and local school sports ground.

Yarra Junction Recreation Reserve is a district sports reserve located along the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail and includes the Yarra Centre, sports field, tennis and netball courts, bowls facility, play space and skate park.

Yarra Centre is a district sports facility offering an indoor sports stadium and aquatic, health and fitness facilities including 25-metre pool, learn to swim pool, leisure pool, gymnasium and multipurpose rooms. The centre serves the Upper Yarra district.

Warburton Caravan Park and Pool Precinct consists of land owned by Yarra Ranges Council and a 40m portion of Crown Land, Yarra River frontage through the existing caravan park managed by Council. The land consists of the Warburton Caravan Park, the recently closed 50m outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, picnic facilities and play space. A community engagement process and master plan has been prepared that supports the redevelopment of the site to protect the Yarra River frontage, improve the amenity and service at the caravan park and redevelop the old pool site as a social recreation park.

Wesburn Park is a large district sports reserve with two sports fields, horse arena, netball courts and picnic area. The venue is also an emergency reserve facility.

Warburton Recreation Reserve is a district sports reserve with sports field, cricket practice nets and bowls facility. There are plans to relocate the cricket practice nets, extend the bowling green to provide a 40m x 40m rink and develop a new netball court and facilities on the disused bowling green and old ladies bowling pavilion. The reserve connects with the Yarra River walking trail.

Millgrove Recreation Reserve is a local sports reserve with sports field and lighting. The reserve is used for soccer and cricket. There is a growing demand to extend the club rooms to provide female change and incorporate public toilets. The Millwarra Primary School is located adjacent to the reserve.

Social recreation parks

Local social recreation parks with picnic facilities and play space opportunities are located along the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail and within 500m of where people live.

The district sports reserves also provide social recreation activities including play spaces and picnic facilities including Yarra Junction Reserve and Warburton Recreation Reserve.
**Trails**

Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail provides a continuous shared use trail which stretches 39km in length from Lilydale Station to the Warburton Township. The Rail Trail is located along the old railway reserve connecting local townships from Lilydale to Warburton. The trail offers tourism, community and recreation benefits.

O’Shannassy Aqueduct Trail is a 30km trail along the old open channel aqueduct that meanders through pristine forest that has been protected for 100 years for water harvesting. The trail passes through Yarra Ranges National park and offers spectacular views of Warburton and the natural landscape. The trail offers tourism and recreation benefits.

Off-road trails are provided in Yarra Ranges National Park and the conservation reserves.

Mountain bike trails in the Yarra State Forest and Yarra Ranges National Park.

**Flora and fauna conservation reserves**

Yarra Ranges National Park is a vital catchment for Melbourne’s water supply and home to forests of Mountain Ash, rainforest and fern gullies, and the endangered Leadbeater’s Possum. Visitor experiences include skiing at Lake Mountain and the Rainforest Gallery with its observation platform and rainforest walkway on the southern slopes of Mount Donna Buang.

Woori Yallock Bushland Creek Reserve is a flora and fauna conservation reserve with Woori Yallock Creek frontage.

Yarra State Forest is a flora and fauna conservation reserve offering a range of short and long walks, picnic and camping areas and lookouts in the mountain ash forests.

The Yarra River is a vegetated riparian corridor that traverses through the precinct.

**Is our existing open space sufficient?**

There is an adequate level of open space in the precinct to cater for existing demand. Open space is presented as natural bushland and a range of sporting reserves, outdoor courts and community parks offering social recreation and relaxation opportunities.

There is a significant amount of open space dedicated to flora and fauna conservation in the area. The precinct also has several creeks and is dissected by the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail which links Warburton to Lilydale by a continuous linear park and off-road trail.

Major sports reserves in the precinct provide for both sport and social recreation functions to the community. These reserves are complemented by significant natural bushland conservation parks that provide the community a connection to nature and varied experiences.

In the rural areas, centrally located open spaces that are flexible and offer diversity in recreation opportunities is encouraged. This principle is applied in Wandin and Seville with major sports facilities and social recreation parks located central to communities and with the size and functionality to offer a range of recreation opportunities to the community.
**Issues**

There is a need to improve the quality of existing open space in the precinct to provide diverse recreation opportunities. Different experiences should be provided at local social recreation parks.

The undulating topography and accessibility within Warburton is a barrier to recreation participation. It is therefore important to connect open spaces with the Main Street of the township and education institutions via safe on and off-road trail.

The trail crossings along major road arterials require traffic calming and intersection treatment to improve the safety of trail users on both the trail and roads.

Major road arterials such as the Warburton Highway are considered barriers to accessing open spaces. Connections to open space within local community are important via off-road trails and road crossings.

The age of the Warburton Outdoor Pool has led to the closure of the pool and a redeveloped site that offers an alternative community social recreation park is required. The park should connect and support the activities along the river corridor and Warburton Caravan Park.

Despite its iconic status much of the Yarra River through the Yarra Ranges is completely inaccessible to the public and its riparian environment severely degraded. The wetland vegetation communities along the river and its billabongs are one of the most threatened in the region. A long term project to meet the environmental challenges along the river and build on its potential by providing public access should be considered.

**Opportunities**

A number of master plans have been prepared for major sports reserves and facilities and social recreation parks in the precinct. There is an opportunity to realise these plans through allocation of open space contributions in priority projects and by seeking funding grants.

There is an opportunity to link the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail with the O’Shannassy Aqueduct and along the Coranderk Aqueduct. This links will connect Warburton to Healesville and add to the nature based recreation and tourism activities and experiences in the precinct.

Consideration should be given to improving township linkages to the Warburton Trail and access to the Warburton Trail from other key reserves in the precinct.

A long term project that explores how council can meet the environmental challenges through rehabilitation works along the Yarra River and provision of a shared use trail for the public would offer environmental, recreation and tourism benefits to the region and capitalise on the rivers potential. Such a trail could ultimately link the Yering Gorge/Mt Lofty Reserve to Warramate Hills and the upper Yarra Valley Townships. This trail would complement other trails in Yarra Ranges such as the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail and O’Shannassy Aqueduct Trail.

There are future opportunities to create additional open space through subdivision of properties in Yarra Ranges. Opportunities exist at Hoddle Street with properties containing remnant bushland at the rear, Little Yarra Road along the creek that would improve the health of the waterway and provide a park link to the township.

A vacant 6000 m² Council-owned property zoned PPRZ adjoins the primary school offers an opportunity for a potential land swap with a portion of land on the corner of Healesville/Kooweerup Road and Symes Road. This property contains remnant vegetation and its central location in the town centre makes it well positioned for a social recreation park.

Partnerships with local sports clubs and schools may be available to manage the use of existing sports facilities and promote the connection of young people to local sport and recreation opportunities.

Facilitate partnerships with Parks Victoria and other open space managers investigating nature-based tourism in the precinct.
PRECINCT L - ACTIONS

Council is acting to realise its planned development projects for the precinct in the following ways.

Implementing the Aquatic Facilities Review

- Yarra Centre: provision of an outdoor water play and community activity lawn area, gym expansion and spa pool and steam room.

Implementing the Hike and Bike Strategy

- Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail: construction of link to Healesville via the Coranderk Aqueduct and Don Road.
- Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail: construction of link to the O’Shannassy Aqueduct Trail.
- Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail: improvement of visitor nodes and signage in response to the Signage Audit and Management Plan.
- Launching Place and Wesburn: development of walking trails.
- Road shoulders: sealing.

Implementing the Warburton Caravan Park and Pool Precinct Master Plan

- Old Warburton outdoor swimming pool: development as a social recreation park in line with recommendations of the Warburton Caravan Park and Pool Precinct Master Plan. The project includes relocating and upgrading the play space and picnic facilities, establishing water play experience and providing an open grass recreation area.

Improvement of the facilities at Woori Yallock Recreation Reserve

- Traffic management at the reserve: improvement.
- Netball and tennis change rooms: upgrade.

Improving the facilities at Yarra Junction Recreation Reserve

- Fencing within the reserve: rationalisation.
- New play space: consideration of extension of fence around the boundary of the sports field and tennis club to achieve better connection of this area with the rest of the reserve.
- Recreation facilities within the reserve and the town centre: investigation of ways to improve connectivity.

Implementing the Wesburn Park Reserve Master Plan

- Netball courts and facilities: upgrade.
- Public toilet, toilets for pony club and netball: provision of facilities.
- Second oval: consideration given to providing for soccer, if participation outgrows Millgrove Recreation Reserve.
- Public access trail and associated environmental rehabilitation program along the Yarra River: consideration as a long-term project.
- Land swap of 60002m council-owned property with the primary school for a portion of land on the corner of Healesville and Kooweerup Road and Symes Road to establish a social recreation park: consideration.
- Additional open space through subdivision of properties in Hoddle Street and Little Yarra Road in Yarra Junction to improve remnant bushland on these properties and create a park link to the township: consideration.

Implementing the Millgrove Recreation Reserve Master Plan

- Pavilion: upgrade to provide additional change facilities and incorporate a public toilet to replace the existing toilet block.

Implementing the Warburton Recreation Reserve Master Plan

- Sports pavilion: upgrade to expand the change rooms and provide for kiosk and gym facilities.
- Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail historic turntable: refurbishing as part of planning permit conditions with future Edgewater Development.

Other planned actions

- Social recreation parks: improvement of quality and diversity of recreation opportunities.
- Schools: exploration of partnerships to jointly use school sports reserves and facilities.
- Parks Victoria and other interest groups: work to exploring the development of Warburton and the surrounding natural bushland as a centre for mountain biking in the Yarra Ranges.
- Parks Victoria and other open space managers: exploration of further partnerships to investigate nature-based tourism in the precinct.
Recommendations

1. Provide an outdoor waterplay and community activity lawn area, gym expansion, spa and steam room at Yarra Centre.
2. Link Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail to Healesville via the Coranderrk Aqueduct and Don Road.
3. Link Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail to the O'Shanassy Aqueduct Trail.
4. Improve visitor nodes and signage on Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail.
5. Develop walking trails in Launching Place and Wesburn.
6. Implement the Warburton caravan park and pool precinct master plan.
7. Improve the facilities at Woori Yallock Recreation Reserve.
8. Improve the facilities at Yarra Junction Recreation Reserve.
9. Implement the Wesburn Park Reserve master plan.
10. Implement the Millgrove Recreation Reserve master plan.
11. Implement the Warburton Recreation Reserve master plan.
12. Improve the quality and diversity of recreation opportunities at neighbourhood parks.
13. Explore relationships with schools to use school sports reserves and facilities.
14. Explore further partnerships with Parks Victoria and other open space managers investigating nature-based recreation and tourism activities, including mountain biking trails in Warburton.
15. Explore acquisition of land for local open space in areas with undersupply and options for surplus open space in areas oversupplied.

Key

Proposed trail
Area under-served by public open space