

Questions and Answers- Olinda Precinct Project

Olinda Playspace

Q. How big will the playspace be?

A. The playspace is a regional-scale playspace, and will be approximately 10 x 70 metres in size.

Q. Has Parks Victoria engaged the local community in the design process?

A. Parks Victoria has commissioned three local artists to contribute to the playspace. The type of artwork includes woodwork, mosaic and visual art (sculpture). Parks Victoria will also invite local school children to contribute to the playspace by adding mosaic elements to the concrete lizard and frog.

Q. Why hasn't Parks Victoria applied for a planning permit from the Yarra Ranges Council?

A. As the land manager, Parks Victoria is only required to apply for a council planning permit when the works trigger the requirement of a planning permit, such as the removal of certain types of vegetation. In this instance, the existing silver birch trees (5m + tall) are incorporated into the design and will be protected during construction.

Q. When will the playspace be open?

The playspace is expected to be ready for community use in mid-2019.

Q. Will there be sufficient car parking to cater for increased visitation?

A. Yes, the existing car park area in the precinct that catered to the former golf course will be sufficient for the playspace. There is also additional parking at the Olinda Recreation Reserve, and in the Olinda Pool and Community House Precinct.

Q: What safety measures will Parks Victoria take to separate the playspace and paths leading to the dog off-lead area?

A. All dogs will be required to be on-lead while outside of the dog off-lead area. Sections of low protective fence will also be installed in addition to buffer zones and planting to provide separation between the playspace and dogs being walked along the nearby walking path.

Q. How does the design of the playspace respond to weather conditions of the mountain?

A. The facilities and surfaces of the Playspace have been designed for year-round use. As per most large playspaces in the Dandenong and Yarra Ranges, the Olinda Playspace is expected to be used all year round.

Olinda Green

Location

Q. What determined the final location of the Olinda Green, including the sports oval?

A. The final location of the Olinda Green has been determined by extensive assessments undertaken by Parks Victoria. These included a cultural heritage assessment, a geotechnical assessment, arboricultural assessment, earthworks balance assessment, and biodiversity assessment reports.

The final location of the oval will avoid an area of potential Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity on the precinct site, will avoid the removal of significant native vegetation including mountain ash trees, reduce the removal of lesser native vegetation and will minimise the quantity and impact of earthworks on site as well as heavy construction traffic movements to and from the site.

The location is close to the precinct's main entrance and car park, as well as the car park adjacent to the swimming pool and the Community House precinct, which will improve circulation and access for community events and markets, as well as provide better connections to the broader Olinda Precinct.

Q. Why does Olinda need a new oval?

A. The demand for junior and women's sport in the Dandenong Ranges has significantly increased over the past five years, with the municipal wide number of female teams taking part in winter sport increasing from 12 teams to 43 teams in the last 3 years. The current oval, as well as other ovals in the area, are not meeting this increased demand. A new space for junior training and play was one of the key desires Parks Victoria heard through the consultation period.

Sports fields also have a 'carrying capacity' – that is, how much physical activity (wear and tear) they can 'carry' before the surface deteriorates and becomes dangerous or unusable. The carrying capacity of the existing Olinda Recreation Reserve Oval is approximately 25 hours per week. The current use of the oval is already in excess of the 25-hour carrying capacity during winter.

To provide for a greater carrying capacity, the Olinda Green will provide an additional and adaptable open space for sports and training.

A healthy and well-designed park space will provide an important opportunity for the community to be healthier by engaging in active sport, walking and other recreation in the great outdoors.

Q. What determined the final size of the oval?

A. The final size of the oval was determined based on environmental, engineering and cultural assessments. Parks Victoria endeavoured to strike a balance between providing an adequately sized field for junior sport and play that meets AFL club standards. The final oval size is smaller than that recommended in the AFL guidelines to ensure as little disturbance to native and significant vegetation as possible, fitting within the significant mountain ash trees located on the Precinct site.

The oval represents only 4.9% of the precinct site, and will be an adaptable open space to allow for community events and markets.

Q. Will the oval affect public access to the upper portion of site?

A: No. The oval will not be fenced, and improved paths will enhance access to the upper portion of site.

Q. When will construction begin?

A. Construction of the oval will begin after Parks Victoria receives a planning permit from the Yarra Ranges Council, and will likely take up to six months.

Accessibility and Lighting

Q. When did Parks Victoria resolve to install lights on the oval?

A. As the detailed designs of the Olinda Green were developed, Parks Victoria resolved that without adequate lighting the oval would not be able to meet the training and play requirements for local sports teams, as these

often take place in the evening, especially during winter when there are shorter hours of sunlight. The lights at the oval may also be able to be utilised for twilight community events and markets into the future.

Q. How bright are the lights for the oval?

A. Lighting system technology has advanced rapidly over the past few years. Parks Victoria will be installing a modern lighting system for the oval, which has considerably less light flare than older systems.

The current lighting design shows that the light illumination level on the ground at 35 metres from the edge of oval will be approximately 1-2 lux. This is about the same as the light from a candle at 1 meter. At that same 35 meters, the light level when looking directly at the oval from a height of 1.5metres will be approximately 2-5 lux, dropping to 2 lux at 50 meters.

This lighting design was submitted to the Yarra Ranges Council as part of the planning permit application for Stage One works.

Q. When will the lights be on?

A. The operation of the lighting at the oval will be managed by the Yarra Ranges Council.

Q. Will the Olinda precinct site be accessible during construction (including mobility access)?

A. Yes, only a small part of the site (approximately 7%) will be temporarily fenced while the oval is under construction to ensure public safety. Safe access corridors along existing pathways will provide access from the carpark to the remainder of the site, which will be identified by information and directional signage on-site.

Environmental Considerations

Q. What steps has Parks Victoria taken to perform a robust Environmental Impact Study?

A. Parks Victoria commissioned environmental consultant, Biosis, to complete a biodiversity assessment for Stage One of the Olinda Precinct Project. This assessment was conducted for the area of the Olinda Green, incorporating the sports oval, and addresses the surrounding biodiversity and relevant to the development of the Olinda Green within the Olinda Precinct site.

Both flora and fauna assessments were conducted as part of the overall biodiversity assessment process.

The design of the Olinda Green will protect all mature mountain ash trees around the perimeter of the oval. Some introduced species of trees and a small number of minor native trees will be removed, however these are of very little habitat value and vegetation being removed will be offset in line with Native Vegetation offset requirements.

There are three species of owls that are common to the Olinda area, however all of these owls breed only in large tree-hollows. None of the trees proposed to be removed contain suitable hollows in which owls might nest.

The Olinda Precinct Project will also provide a designated dog off-lead area, which will feature buffer zones to separate the dog off-lead area from surrounding park users and flora and fauna.

Q. Are there any *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) listed flora and fauna located at the site?

A. An assessment of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) database listed flora and fauna has been completed by Biosis, based on their site assessment for the Olinda Green.

The Olinda Green development will impact an area previously cleared for the former golf course, which now supports predominantly introduced vegetation in the upper reaches of the Olinda Precinct site. The proposed Olinda Green development is sited away from more substantial native vegetation within the adjacent Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Potential impacts to flora and fauna from the Olinda Green development have been addressed in line with current legislative requirements outlined in the Olinda Green Biodiversity Assessment Report.

Dog Off-Lead Area

Q. When will the designs for the dog off-lead area be ready?

A. Designs for the dog off-lead area are progressing and are expected to be ready in late-October 2018.

Designs for the remaining elements of the site, including facilities, tracks and trails are also underway, and will blend all of the precinct's elements together.

Q: Will the dog off-lead area be fenced?

A. The dog off-lead area will not be fenced, however there will be clearly defined buffer zones between the dog off-lead area and the surrounding bush land.

Q. How will the public access the dog off-lead area?

A. Parks Victoria will be designing a path system to allow for access to the dog off-lead area from the existing car parks. The detailed designs for the dog off-lead area and the connecting tracks and trails are still underway, and will be guided by the location of existing walking paths used by dog walkers.

Q. Will the dog off lead area feature water taps?

A. Drinking fountains and dog watering stations will be incorporated into the design of the precinct.

Q. Why isn't the dog off-lead area on the upper portion of the site?

A. Parks Victoria has undertaken environmental, arboricultural and cultural heritage assessments to determine the final locations of the various elements of the Olinda Precinct Project, including the best location for the Olinda Green, playspace and dog off-lead area.

A survey of existing use paths also informed the final location of the dog off-lead area.

The community will still be able to walk their dogs around the wider Olinda precinct, including on the Olinda Green, provided dogs are on-lead.

General

Q. What has been funded?

A. The Olinda Precinct Project has received \$6.76 million of funding for the creation of:

- A nature-based playspace
- A designated dog off-lead area
- The 'Olinda Green', which will feature a sports oval and open space for markets and events
- Walking tracks and trails
- Picnic tables, BBQ, shelters, seating and other visitor amenities
- Upgraded car park
- An additional netball court in the neighbouring Olinda Recreation Reserve
- Upgrades to existing cricket nets in the neighbouring Olinda Recreation Reserve

Q. What consultation did Parks Victoria undertake in the preparation of the *Olinda Golf Course Precinct Plan 2017*?

A. Parks Victoria conducted three rounds of community consultation prior to the release of the Olinda Precinct Plan. This included briefings, drop-in sessions, listening posts, meetings with stakeholder groups and a community reference group.

The community consultation received a significant amount of input from a range of different stakeholders across the Olinda community. More than 215 people attended consultation events and Parks Victoria received 560 survey responses as part of the consultation.

Q: When will the Olinda Precinct Project be completed?

A. Works are being staged to allow the community access to other parts of the precinct while construction for certain elements is underway. Parks Victoria is expecting the project to be fully complete by early-2020.

Q. Will the Olinda precinct remain an effective fuel break?

A. The Olinda Precinct Project will not detract from the value of the site as a fuel break. The area's role as a fuel break was a major consideration for the future planning for this site.

The former Olinda Golf Course, originally constructed in 1952, was designed to take in the views of the area, and to act as a fire break for the Olinda township.

The adjacent Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden (formerly National Rhododendron Gardens) and R. J. Hamer Arboretum were also developed around this time, and also formed part of the Forest Commission's fire protection plan for Olinda.

The R. J. Hamer Arboretum, the former golf course and Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden continue to play an important role in fire protection by acting as fuel breaks for the Olinda community.

These properties act as a fire break due to their predominantly exotic vegetation and cleared open land, largely free of natural vegetation vulnerable to fire

The small area of parkland (6.4 hectares) annexed to complement the existing Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden will not detract from the existing strategic fire break. The area will continue to be managed as open parkland and public gardens in a predominantly exotic setting.

Q. Has Parks Victoria undertaken a fire management strategy for the Olinda Precinct Project?

A. Parks Victoria has engaged a fire assessment management consultant Terramatrix to complete a Bushfire Development Report for the Olinda Precinct Project, which was submitted to the Yarra Ranges Council as part of the planning permit application for Stage One Works. This assessment has been available to the public via the Yarra Ranges Council's website.

Q. Will the Olinda Mechanics Institute Hall be moved?

A. There are ongoing investigations and conversations around the potential relocation of the hall. It is not being considered in this stage of the project.

Q. Why was a fence erected along the new boundary of the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden (formerly National Rhododendron Garden)?

A. The Olinda Precinct Project has extended the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden by 6.4 hectares.

The fence was erected to border this extension and is critical to the protection and conservation of this garden. The extension will provide opportunities for enhancement of the current visitor experience and projects carried out in the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden, and will continue to be available to the public.

There will be selected planting along the fence line to help it blend into the natural environment.

Q. Does Parks Victoria have plans to build their offices on the land behind the fence?

A. The *Olinda Golf Course Precinct Plan 2017*, recommended investigating the potential relocation and reconfiguration of the Parks Victoria depot, as part of the upgrade of traffic management and access to the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden.

This is not currently being considered by Parks Victoria as part of this stage of the project.

If the relocation is considered in the future, it will be focused around enhancing the community and visitor experiences of the site.

Q. What is happening to the old café?

A. Parks Victoria has undertaken a condition assessment of the café building, and is considering the impact these findings have on any potential commercial operation within the building. Parks Victoria is expecting to have a decision made in the coming months.

Last year Parks Victoria launched a Mobile Trading trial which saw the successfully appointed food and beverage mobile trader, Oscar Vintage Coffee Van, set up at the Olinda Precinct.

Q. What is happening with Chalet Road?

A. Chalet Road is managed by the Yarra Ranges Council, and investigations in relation to the road do not form any part of the Olinda Precinct Project.

Q. As Victoria's primary conservation agency, why is Parks Victoria developing this site?

A. Parks Victoria is also one of the largest tourism and recreation providers in Victoria. In these roles we provide not only for protection and preservation of the environment, but also social wellbeing and economic benefits through local employment in the industries that service tourism. Our vision of *Healthy Parks Healthy People* sees the facilitation of active and passive recreation on Parks Victoria managed land, and seek to connect the community and visitors with nature.

The closure of the golf course provided a rare opportunity to reinvent a public sports and recreational space for the community. Parks Victoria has actively sought input from the community in order to shape the future of the Olinda precinct site and to provide a recreational space that will meet the current and future needs of the Olinda community and broader Victorian public.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/olindaplan>

If you'd like to receive project updates directly, please email:

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