

The wetland and bird sanctuary provides habitat for over 20 species of water birds, including a number of migratory species that are listed under agreements between the Australia and Japan and China for the protection of migratory birds and their habitats that are in danger of extinction²².

A raised boardwalk connects the end of the Esplanade to Fyans St. and Quamby St. The boardwalk traverses the low lying Barongarook creeklands, with the west arm crossing the creek via an old timber bridge to meet up with Fyans St. The east arm of the boardwalk links to Quamby St. The boardwalk is narrow with right angle junctions that do not provide easy access for bike riders.

There is an opportunity to vegetate the area in line with Guilfoyle's vision for 'The Dell' and to incorporate a public art trail along the raised board walk that reflects the environmental and social themes of the lake environments and the township of Colac.

A significant public art feature through this area will potentially draw interest and activity across the Barongarook Ck. and to the wetlands environmental features. Refer to section 6.5 for additional discussion on public art.

Consideration should be given to extending the public art trail upstream along the Barongarook Ck. to Murray St. Over time, as the trail is developed, it has the potential to be a major feature that extends the opportunities associated with the foreshore zone without 'crowding' the foreshore zone itself.

Key focus for the zone:

- Environmental
 - Habitat / wildlife protection
 - Environmental education
 - Views
- Heritage / Culture
 - Public art
- Recreation / Lifestyle
 - Walking / jogging / cycling – existing shared pathway upgrade.
 - Nature observation

Key Actions for the Zone

- Cluster plantings of trees such as River Red Gums around Esplanade Park
- An environmental education / picnic shelter
- Environmental education stations
- Wetlands boardwalk and bird hide
- Extension of the raised boardwalk from the vicinity of The Esplanade to meet with the shared foreshore pathway near Barongarook Ck. mouth
- Public art trail (through 'The Dell') that reflect the natural environment, indigenous and non-indigenous history, and story telling.
- Signage – Distance / direction, precinct and compliance signage.



²² www.otway.biz/lakecolac.html

Zone 7: Bruce St. to Clark St. (Reference Map 7)

Overview of the zone

The pathway in the form of the maintenance track continues along the foreshore past the former landfill site and the informal extension of McGonigal St to Clark St. The former landfill site cannot be vegetated because tree and plant roots will penetrate the 'cap' / cover of the landfill which then allows the contained leachates to escape into the environment.

Because of the above and the remoteness of the site, the master plan does not recommend the site for BMX or other related activities that were raised for consideration during the project.

There are high points along this section of the track, particularly in the vicinity of McGonigal St., that provide expansive views over the lake.

Consideration could be given to allowing dogs off-leash given it is not a significant habitat or recreation zone and there are no other opportunities to allow dogs off leash in the parklands. Consideration was given to the Esplanade Park as a possible off-leash area, however its close proximity to the wetlands and associated wildlife would preclude this.

Key focus for the zone:

- Recreation / Lifestyle
 - Walking / jogging / cycling
 - Dog off-leash
- Environmental
 - Amenity tree planting
 - Views

Key Actions for the Zone

- Cluster plantings of trees such as River Red Gums along the lake foreshore and the edge of the landfill where they will not interfere with the landfill cap and accompanying seating are proposed. This will enhance the amenity of the zone, provide a visual connection with Esplanade Park and the Wetlands Zone, and provide a visual buffer from the industrial buildings at the end of Clark St. Screen planting along the last 50-75 metres of St. will provide an additional visual buffer.
- It is not proposed to formalise the foreshore pathway at this time due to the low level of use. However, use should be monitored and in the long term there can be further investigation of opportunities to formalise the pathway and extend it around the lake to the north.
- Signage – Distance / direction, and compliance signage.



Zone 8: Lower Barongarook Ck. to Chapel Street Bridge (Reference Maps: Map 8)

Overview of the zone

From Fyans St. the pathway travels along both sides of the Barongarook Ck. and crosses the creek 4 times. The pathway is generally 1.8-2 metres wide in this zone and is in predominantly poor condition. The creek parklands have a sense of serenity after the more formal and activity focus of other zones.

The zone is characterised by old plantings of large exotic trees and in some areas later plantings of Australian natives (northern area of Hugh Murray Reserve).

The Hugh Murray Reserve includes seven old steel archways that are covered in creeping plants including jasmine, hardenbergia and honeysuckle²³. The archway structures are old and dated and because they are enclosed by vegetation it is difficult to see into the archway and as a result they do not comply with safe design principles.

²³ Declared pest plant references) <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/state-prohibited-weeds>,
http://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/page/Page.asp?Page_Id=203&h=1



The zone also includes a large open timber structure, referred to as 'the Woolshed' (near Chapel St.), which was constructed as a community project in the 1980s along with a number of other structures including small timber gazebos in varying condition, and a pathway junction arbour that is also dated and in poor condition.

There is an opportunity to better define Chapel St. as an entry point to the foreshore parklands with street tree plantings and more attractive and updated road / pedestrian barrier treatments. Wear on the roadside indicates car parking occurs at the end of the barriers on a narrow strip of road verge.

Council has undertaken extensive weed eradication, planting, and bank stabilisation works in this zone over the last 3-5 years.



The Hugh Murray Reserve is classified as a 'neighbourhood' park²⁴ which indicates that it is not a site that warrants or is appropriate for additional recreation of social infrastructure. Any additional infrastructure proposed for the site must take into consideration the likely level of use, given its profile, and the function of the park in the overall open space / park network.

There is the opportunity to establish the Hugh Murray Reserve as a more significant local family recreation precinct with the enhancement of the informal BMX track; land sculpting and feature rock installations that are suitable for climbing and scrambling; dog off leash sensory plantings and exploratory landscapes; and social / picnic facilities. Respondents to the community survey expressed a desire for family friendly areas and facilities elsewhere in the parklands as an alternative to the

foreshore area.

There is also the opportunity to continue the public artwork trail upstream of the proposed art trail alongside the raised boardwalk in zone 6.

Creative and significant feature landscapes that are easy to maintain provide exploratory and play opportunities for families, and if it remains as a dog off-leash area, the family dog.

Key focus for the zone:

- Environmental
 - Environmental education
 - Tree / vegetation amenity – mixed planting of native and exotic
 - Habitat enhancement
- Recreation / Lifestyle
 - Walking / jogging / cycling
 - Family play
 - Off-leash dog activities

Key Actions for the Zone

- Removing of the 7 old archways and derelict gazebos
- Continue the public art trail with installations that reflect the natural environment, indigenous and non-indigenous history, and story telling.
- Bridge replacement upgrading



- Enhancing Hugh Murray Reserve as a local community hub with activity spaces and recreation features that attract families and young people. Features to include land sculpting and large feature rocks that are 'playable and climbable'; enhancing of the BMX track; and social / picnic facilities
- Mature feature plantings of trees such as Crepe Myrtle along Chapel St. to profile the entry to the parklands and provide seasonal colour to the streetscape
- Informal car park off Chapel St. (Hugh Murray Reserve)
- Signage – Distance / direction, and precinct signage.

Zone 9: Upper Barongarook Ck. from Chapel St. to Murray St. Bridge (Reference Map 9)



Overview of the zone

The Barongarook Ck. pathway continues under the Chapel St. bridge to emerge on the western side of the creek as a 'desire line', an unformed track that continues through the 3rd / 4th Colac Scouts precinct to rejoin the sealed pathway.

The northern area of this precinct is characterised by older unkempt plantings of Australian native trees, open areas, and low lying ground that is often wet for 4-6 months of the year. The southern area of the precinct contains the scout facilities and access road ways.



The main pathway through this zone is accessed from the footpath on Chapel St. and travels along the east side of the Barongarook Ck. The area known as the 'Sculpture Park' lays to the east of the creek and includes various steel based public art installations that were erected in the 1970s as part of a public art project.



Some of the pieces have been relocated and many of the remaining works are in disrepair and have no interpretive information that would normally accompany such installations. The works are scattered through open parkland areas, which can remain wet underfoot for 4-6 months of the year. The general consensus from consultation supported the removal of the works from the site because they were dated, and are not an attractive reflection of the Colac Community.

There is however the opportunity to continue the public artwork trail proposed for zones 6 and 8, upstream and through this zone



This zone can be enhanced with plantings to screen adjoining properties, including the motel.

When the pathway meets with the Murray St. wayside stop, the main branch of the pathway follows the creekline past the scout precinct and passes under Murray St. A landscape plan has been developed for this precinct as the CBD entry point.

The other branch of the pathway travels along the eastern side of the wayside stop where it ends at Murray St. There is an opportunity to neaten vegetation in this area and

increase the profile of the area as a main entry point to the parklands and creek pathway

Council has renovated the toilet block and added picnic facilities and shelters at the wayside stop. The car park is graveled but is subject to degradation, particularly in wet weather. Some residents of the adjoining units use the car park for private parking and there is evidence that residents use the car park, parklands, and lane way at the back of the motel to access their units.

Council has also undertaken extensive weed eradication, planting, and bank stabilisation works in this zone over the last 3-5 years.

Key focus for the zone:

- Environmental
 - Tree / vegetation amenity – mixed planting of native and exotic trees
 - Habitat enhancement
- Recreation / Lifestyle
 - Walking / jogging / cycling
 - Reflection / Nature observation

Key Actions for the Zone

- Continue the new public art trail with installations that reflect the natural environment, indigenous and non-indigenous history, and story telling.
- Relocating / removing installations from the Sculpture Park
- Additional exotic tree plantings to the east of the pathway to create massed lawn plantings
- Screen planting of adjoining properties
- Prevent car access from the parklands
- Upgrading wayside stop car park
- Neatening vegetation along pathway (eastern side of wayside stop)
- Enhancing entry in line with CBD and Entrances Master Plan
- Signage – Distance / direction, and precinct signage.

Zone 10: Meredith Park (Reference Maps: Map 9)

Overview of the zone



Meredith Park is on the northern bank of Lake Colac. Prior to 2008 when water levels were high the park was a popular picnic and recreation zone, and a launch point for watercraft. The site treed and rocky with a peaceful and expansive outlook over the lake

There is no fee for camping at the site, however council is in the process of considering whether to retain free camping. Discussions with caravaners indicate it is the natural amenity, quietness, and remoteness of the site that appeal to caravaners.

The site is popular for special events such as New Year's Eve celebrations and private celebrations. Because of the remoteness of the site it often attracts anti-social behavior at these events.

The BBQ, picnic and toilet facilities at the site are basic but any upgrade should consider the future of the site as a camping venue.

There is an opportunity to improve the amenity of the site with some minor maintenance and road works. Pine trees are the dominant tree species at the site, which need to be removed over time. These can be replaced with a mix of Australian natives and shade trees, that will assist to suppress grass growth over the rocky landscape.

Key focus for the zone:

- Recreation / Lifestyle
 - Reflection / Nature observation
 - Camping – The continuation or extent of camping will depend on the outcome of the proposed camping feasibility study
 - Water activities – The extent of activities is dependent on water levels
- Environmental
 - Tree / vegetation amenity enhancement – mixed planting of native and exotic

Key Actions for the Zone

- Cleanup vegetation and increase maintenance to gravel road and road verges
- A feasibility study to determine the future of camping at Meredith Park
- Depending on the outcome of the feasibility study, renew or relocate toilets and renew picnic infrastructure

- Fishing platform. Priority will be dependent on lake water levels and associated fish stock
- Signage – Distance / direction, precinct and compliance signage.

8 Design Considerations

This section highlights some of the key open space and landscape design principles that underpin the Lake Colac Foreshore Master Plan.

8.1 Universal Design

Universal design is the term used to describe the practice of designing buildings and public spaces so they allow use by the broadest range of ages and abilities.

Rather than focusing on users with specific disabilities, universal design focuses on making provision for mobility issues faced by people through every stage of their life.

The key principles include design that caters for a wide range of abilities, is simple and easy to use, and minimises the effort required to use.

The following are examples of how universal design principles will influence the Lake Colac Master Plan:

- Easy and direct access between park amenities and features such as between car parks and toilets and picnic areas
- Play equipment and environments that optimises play opportunities for children of different ages and abilities; and opportunities for carers of different abilities to interact with children
- Pathways and access ramps that are easy to access, and even and wide enough to accommodate people with different mobility needs and abilities e.g. motorised scooters, children on trikes, parents with prams
- Toilets that are easily accessible for different abilities
- Car parking spaces of a size and layout that allows easy access to cars for mothers with children and prams, people with mobility aids, or people with picnic equipment
- Feeder and internal road crossings that are safe
- Directional and distance signage that clearly indicates distance; estimated times; and terrain information if relevant.



8.2 Design that Encourages Use and Physical Activity

There is an array industry documents^{25 26} that clearly detail the design requirements for public spaces so these spaces will attract use, and encourage people to be physically and socially active.

Importantly, these spaces must be and feel safe, and be attractive and inviting. To achieve this, spaces should:

- Be modern, attractive, inviting, and well maintained to encourage constant and high levels of use used
- Optimise sightlines including sightlines:

Healthy active spaces are achieved by providing:

- well planned networks of walking and cycling routes
- streets with direct, safe and convenient access
- local destinations within walking distance from homes
- accessible open spaces for recreation and leisure
- conveniently located public transport stops
- local neighbourhoods fostering community spirit.

Ref: Healthy By Design

²⁵ Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria, Department of Land Water Environment and Planning

²⁶ Healthy By Design: A Planners' Guide to Environments for Active Living, Victorian Heart Foundation

- Into parks from surrounding streets and local residences. This means minimising the enclosing of spaces by backyard fences
- Along pathways
- From car parks and toilets
- Be well lit to enhance visibility and natural surveillance
- Be designed to accommodate the activities people want to use them for e.g. recreation and commuter trails
- Regular spacing of seating i.e. every 200-400 mts
- Have well designed elements such as park furniture, drinking fountains, public information, public toilets, and play equipment to encourage the informal use of parks
- Ensure vegetation and landscape features (e.g. pergolas, rock mounds) do not obscure sightlines or lighting
- Have directional signage to major local destinations, public transport, facilities (e.g. police, telephone); distance and 'walking time' signage, closest exit routes etc.
- Spaces that are well used are less likely to be subject to vandalism and anti-social behavior.

9 Discussion of General Project Findings

A number of considerations raised during consultation were relevant to all, or a number, of the project zones. These are discussed in this section.

9.1 Lake Colac Water Body

There is an overwhelming desire for the return of the days when lake water levels were consistently high and enabled water based activities to flourish.

There was diverse opinion expressed as to the strategies that might return water to Lake Colac, and the sometimes-high costs associated with these. This is despite the many technical and scientific reports²⁷ written about changed climatic conditions that will continue to affect water levels.

The majority of project participants acknowledged the changed climatic conditions in the region and the ongoing impact on water levels. In view of this, they agreed there should be a focus on enhancing land-based opportunities as the priority over water based activities.

9.2 Activation of Spaces

Spaces that are constantly used have a number of attributes that stand them apart from lesser-used spaces. These attributes include a wide range of different things to do, to see, to interact with all in close proximity to each other; attractions for different age groups and abilities; facilities that support these attractions such as toilets and picnic facilities; infrastructure such as pathways that makes it easy to move between different environments and facilities; attractive and interesting design features; natural features; and features such as lighting that increase hours of use. Importantly they feel safe and are safe.

The more of these features and considerations that can be addressed then the more popular the space will be that can be drawn together the more popular or 'activated' a space will.

A number of council planning documents have identified the need to activate the Foreshore Zone including the Open Space Strategy and the Lake Colac Commercial Development Opportunity Report²⁸

This section gives consideration to the activation of the Foreshore Zone, which received strong support through the project, and the

'Enhancements to informal recreation facilities can generate broader social benefits including improvements to community health and fitness, enhanced civic pride and improved recreation opportunities.'
Ref: Lake Colac Commercial Development Opportunity Report, p31

²⁷ Refer Appendix 1 for examples

²⁸ Lake Colac Commercial Development: Opportunity Profile, Cost-Benefit Analysis and Economic Impact Assessment

activation of other spaces such as trails and the surrounding Foreshore.

9.2.1 Activation of the Foreshore Zone

There is overwhelming agreement from the community consultation for the activation of the Foreshore Zone, which is viewed as a lost opportunity for the town's economy. There is a strong desire for the Foreshore Zone to 'better reflect who we are as a community'²⁹.

The Open Space Strategy identifies the Lake Colac Foreshore as a regional open space asset. Currently it does not have the level of features and amenities, and the level of use that normally accompanies a regional level facility.

Comments about the foreshore typically related to the need for additional and modern picnic, BBQ and toilet facilities; invigorating and cleaning up the area; providing facilities that cater for families; shade trees; modern play features that cater for a wider age group and people of all abilities, and things that make the foreshore interesting and different.

Residents involved in the project identified 'making the foreshore area in front of the Botanic Gardens more appealing'³⁰ as the most important priority for improving the Foreshore.

Activation of the foreshore will only be achieved by introducing features and environments that people want access to and by landscape and design features that create attractive and safe environments. Public spaces that have people constantly coming and going because there is a significant array of different things to do, will in turn attract more people, creating a destination that becomes a prominent community hub.

There does not appear to be any sound justification for the inclusion of any significant commercial infrastructure at this time. Council has commissioned reports that made recommendations regarding water based commercial activities and does not recommend that commercial infrastructure be developed in the foreshore areast this time.

The CFA training track is viewed as an obstacle to the foreshore achieving its potential as a community and family recreation hub. Previous studies³¹ have recommended that the CFA fire training track and facilities be moved. These structures remain intrusive on views from the Botanic and impose on the amenity of the lower foreshore area. The CFA training track significantly impacts on the ability to enhance the grassed foreshore area and expand its use.

The training track is used in summer 2 times a week for senior training and 2 times a week for junior training.

The project considered opportunities to use the sealed training track for alternative activities including recreation activities and community markets. However, the safety, functional and access requirements of these activities cannot be addressed with the existing dimensions and configuration of the track. Importantly the size and location of the running track prevents optimising the use and development of the foreshore area as a significant community recreation and social hub.

Residents at community meetings and responding to the survey strongly identified with the need for 'wow' features in the foreshore areas, and in particular in the Foreshore Zone, that might include landscape features and a more significant and modern play space.

A large number of residents³² consulted for the project viewed the foreshore as a good location for an 'iconic

The foreshore ... 'A safe, vibrant spot well utilised by the community ... A really well developed spot that will encourage activities such as walking, running, cycling, catching up with friends and simply enjoying the fresh air'
Ref: Community survey respondent



²⁹ Lake Colac Foreshore Master Plan, Community Survey, 2015

³⁰ Lake Colac Foreshore Master Plan, Community Survey, 2015; community meetings; project comment wall at COPACC

³¹ Patrick & Wallace, 1993, as cited in the Botanic Gardens Master Plan, p100; Botanic Gardens Master Plan; 2012 Lake Colac Master Plan

³² including 62% of survey respondents who agreed / strongly agreed. 38% of survey respondents disagreed / strongly disagreed with a play space on the foreshore

play space' that could cater for a wider age and skill range than the existing play space. Contrary opinion was reflected on the basis that a play space would change the use and amenity of the foreshore; would not be in keeping with the amenity and theme of the Botanic Gardens; and would not have shelter from prevailing winds.

Young people involved in the survey communicated a desire for more exciting and challenging things for them to do. Older children indicated that they 'hung around' the play space because there was nowhere else to go. They did not find the play space suitable or challenging enough and did not find other areas of the foreshore parklands particularly inviting for young people.

The great majority of people who participated in the project recognise and accept that prospects associated with the water have significantly diminished. This is because of changed environmental conditions, and water levels that are unlikely to return to those of the past for any consistent period of time.

They did however ask that consideration be given to opportunities to create a 'connection to the water' though they were unclear how this might be achieved. The project proposes that circular walkway be constructed at the end of the jut of land that includes the mosaic. The walkway will extend the visual, and on some occasions physical, connection to the water body; provide access to the sandy lake shoreline when exposed; and will sit above the water when water levels are higher to provide a reflective space.

Further activation can be achieved through partnerships with private enterprise. This is occurring to a small degree with private fitness providers using the foreshore, Botanic Gardens and pathways, and often at times when the Foreshore are not widely used. Additional opportunities should be considered as they arise or proactively investigated. If demand from commercial operators does eventuate to any significant degree council may need to develop a policy to guide.

9.2.2 Activity Nodes

Foreshore and Botanic Gardens Play Space



The Lake Colac foreshore play space is located on the treed eastern embankment of the Botanic Gardens.

The community and the Friends of the Botanic Gardens have primarily been responsible for the development of the play space over this time and many of those close to the development have strong sentiment about any changes that might be proposed for the play space. The play space is in an attractive and shady setting, which provides protection from the heat in the summer.



Despite this it has to be acknowledged that the layout and design of the play space is dated as are many of the pieces of equipment, even though some remain popular with children. There are three key issues that detract from the site as a play space and these are highlighted in the Victorian State Government 'Safer Design Guidelines' and the 'Healthy by Design Guidelines'. Because of the surrounding vegetation and terrain passive surveillance of the site from the road and Foreshore Zone is poor. In addition, sightlines from the main seating and picnic area are limited.



Further, the play space does not provide easy access for children and carers with restricted mobility, and the terrain will make this more difficult to address than a play space on a more even site. Feedback from mothers with prams and young children and older people commented that many elements within the play space are difficult to access.

There was significant feedback from parents and school children that the play space did not cater for older children, lacked 'challenging' and 'interesting' elements and was

outdated.³³ It will not be possible to introduce elements that address these requirements because of the restrictions associated with its location in the Botanic Gardens.

Upgrading and relocating the play space to the Foreshore Zone had greater support from project participants than upgrading the play space in its current location. It is however noted that shade structures would need to be incorporated into the design on the foreshore until new tree plantings provided natural shade.

A play space constructed on the foreshore should be sympathetic to the natural environment of the adjoining Botanic Gardens, integrated well with the open grassed area and the gardens. Heritage Victoria has given 'in principle' support to the foreshore play space however approval will be dependent on the final design.

The master plan recommends that consideration be given to a nature / botanic themed play and education space for younger children in the vicinity of the existing play space.

Alternative sites for a playspace

The open space area on the Esplanade and the Hugh Murray Reserve were suggested as alternative sites for a regional play space. This was primarily by people who did not support the relocation of the play space to the Foreshore Zone.

If a play space were to be located at either of these sites, the retention of the Botanic Gardens play space could not be justified on play space planning basis or in terms of cost. That is, an additional play space could not be justified in such close proximity to existing play spaces (Chapel St. and Botanic Gardens play space) or in terms of the cost to maintain and renew the play space over its life. In addition, council is struggling to maintain and renew existing play spaces and has to plan for additional play space in growth areas.

A site that is to accommodate a regional play space needs to have, or have the space for toilets, picnic and social facilities and shelters, pathways that connect to parklands and play elements, and off-road and sealed car parking.

Regional play spaces are usually on regional level open space that has a range of social and recreation activity options. The Hugh Murray Reserve and the Esplanade Park are classified as 'Neighbourhood' level parks in the Open Space Strategy³⁴, which means they are not designated to have regional level facilities.



Fitness / Exercise Elements

The foreshore is popular with fitness trainers and for sporting club training sessions. These groups use the Botanic Gardens embankment and internal road, the foreshore pathway and to a lesser extent the exercise equipment at the end of Stodart St. west. These groups use the Foreshore because of the different environments available, the attractive amenity of the area, and the camaraderie associated with being with like-minded people. Equipment that would provide alternative training and exercise options was looked on favourably but not seen as a necessity.

³³ COPACC display and feedback wall, onsite meetings, children's submissions and surveys, community survey

³⁴ Colac Otway Open Space Strategy, p52

Western Bay Park (Hamilton St.)

There is an opportunity to enhance the Western Bay Park as part of a longer-term plan to upgrade and integrate the foreshore area occupied by the yachting and sea scout's buildings. Council plans to renew the Western Bay Park play space in the on council's 2016 capital works program. There is an opportunity to create a play / activity node that provides recreation and health and wellbeing infrastructure for a wide age range. The master plan recommends that consideration be given to constructing a parkour circuit for young people, and or installing new fitness equipment once the equipment at the end of Stodart St. west reaches the end of its life.

The master plan proposes that mature trees be planted on the site to provide shade and make the site more attractive. Development on the site will need to be undertaken in consultation with local residents, and young people who were involved in consultation for the project.

The right of all people, regardless of age or ability, to access play spaces and associated amenities such as toilets, seats and tables, and pathways in line with the requirements of the Federal Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

9.3 Infrastructure

The Lake Colac foreshore parklands are classified as a 'regional' level asset. This means that, generally speaking, facilities and environments will be developed to a higher level than at 'district' or 'township' level facilities. Council defines the type and level of development (e.g. for trails, buildings, bollards) for each classification of open space.³⁵

It is necessary that infrastructure and environments are renewed and upgraded over time to ensure they remain relevant to community needs and expectations, attractive, and modern in design. Proactive maintenance will help extend the life of public infrastructure, however trends and expectations change over time, which means council, has to budget for the ongoing renewal of its public infrastructure if it is to continue to reflect the aspirations of the community. Residents involved in the project identified a number of commonly recurring themes and aspirations relating to infrastructure. These are summarised as follows:

- Ensure a modern and consistent style and colour of infrastructure for seating, shelters, barriers and bollards, bridges and pathways / walkways
- Modernise or replace old / out of date buildings and structures
- Ensure infrastructure incorporates creative, unique and conversational design features

The following sections summarise findings in relation to specific types of infrastructure – buildings and structures surfaces; signage; park furniture; public art and memorial plates.

9.3.1 Buildings and Structures

Buildings along the foreshore vary greatly in style and construction materials and are generally very dated and tired.

When buildings reach the end of their life consideration should be given to removing or consolidating them with other buildings if there is still a viable use for them. In the short-term rendering / painting of the buildings should be considered to provide a colour theme that is consistent with other infrastructure, and minimises their visual impact.

Council undertook cosmetic works on the three toilet blocks in the parklands³⁶. This has provided a short-term enhancement of the buildings but over time they need to be replaced with modern facilities.

Both the Colac Botanic Gardens Conservation Study³⁷ and the later review of the Botanic Gardens Master Plan³⁸ recommended, at a minimum, the painting of the building occupied by the Colac Angling Club, and preferably its removal.

³⁵ Colac Otway Open Space Strategy, p15

³⁶ Murray St; Foreshore carpark; Meredith Park

³⁷ Patrick & Wallace, 1993, as cited in the Botanic Gardens Master Plan, p100

³⁸ Colac Botanic Gardens Master Plan Review, 2012, p91

Even more modern structures such as the picnic shelters at the Murray St. wayside stop and Meredith Park do not reflect a style or standard characteristic of a regional open space asset or a CBD 'gateway'. The picnic / band rotunda in the Foreshore Zone, while a representation of a heritage theme, is different in style again.



The community is looking for more picnic facilities in nodes throughout foreshore areas that can provide opportunities for adjoining residential areas. Shelters need to be designed so they are of a size and style that provide adequate shelter and extend use of the parklands throughout the year.

Structures throughout the parklands, such as bridges, arbours and pergolas, are generally constructed from treated pine timber, and are of a style that is characteristic of 1970's and 80's design. Many of these structures are in poor condition, do not reflect modern day design trends and as a result detract from the amenity of the parklands.

Some of these structures were built with a significant investment of community labour and passion as in the case of the 'Hayshed' and the wooden arbour over the trail in Hugh Murray Reserve. These together with the dilapidated timber shelters near the raised walk way alongside Barongarook Ck. and alongside Fyans St. have reached the end of their practical / structural life and need to be dismantled.

Similarly, the seven steel archways along the creek are dated and detract from the amenity of the parklands. The archways are not in keeping with safe landscape design principles³⁹ because they are fully enclosed with creeping plants and so do not allow for the passive surveillance of people who walk through or around the arbours.

Passive surveillance of the parklands should be optimised, particularly along Barongarook Ck. where residential properties abut the parklands and passive surveillance is generally only achieved from the intersecting roads. Many people reported that they do not feel comfortable using the archways, particularly when there are no people around and after twilight. There was support for removing the archways for reasons of safety and amenity. In addition, the archways do not provide the minimum 0.5 m clearance of either side of a pathway used by cyclists⁴⁰ or allow a clear line of sight to oncoming cyclists and pedestrians.

There are however residents who have a sentimental attachment to the archways for historic (e.g. extension of the Botanic Garden theme, their age) or environmental reasons (e.g. they provide habitat for wildlife).

³⁹ Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment Crime Prevention Victoria; Healthy By Design, SA Government

⁴⁰ Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides, p 107

Four bridges cross the Barongarook Ck. between the foreshore and Chapel St. These should be progressively upgraded to better reflect the design guidelines for infrastructure throughout the parklands.



9.3.2 Pathways

The style and condition of pathways throughout the parklands differs significantly. The most common surface is concrete as in the vicinity of Murray Street and Ross's Point and bitumen. In the area between Quamby St and the Esplanade there is a raised walkway.

The construction of the brick pathway in the Foreshore Zone is a relatively recent development. For some residents the pathway will be very symbolic and there is likely to be a sentimental attachment. When the pathway is upgraded consideration must be given to an appropriate incorporation of the pavers into the pathway or an appropriate feature. This should be done in conjunction with people for whom the pavers have special meaning.

Overall, the narrow width (1.8-2.0 mts) of pathways and the uneven or poor condition of surfaces means pathways are well below the recommended minimum 2.5-3.0 mtr width⁴¹. Pathways throughout the parklands are used by families with prams and children on bikes or scooters; skateboarders and inline skaters; fitness and recreation joggers and cyclists; and dog walkers.

The standard of pathways is not supporting of the range of activities residents want to use the pathways for. The pressure on pathways in the foreshore parklands is particularly intense given there are no other off road pathways in Colac.

The master plan recommends that when pathways are upgraded to meet the standards for shared pathways in recognition of the range of activities, ages, and skill levels they cater for. The master plan also recommends that pathways have a 0.5 – 1.0 mt clearance either side, be of a consistent width, and have a smooth and even surface. This should also apply to access pathways and ramps from adjoining streets and car parks.

Good design⁴² of shared pathways will optimise use and minimise conflict between pathway users⁴³. Good design should also be complemented by educational messages relating to pathway etiquette.

41 Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6a - Pedestrians and cyclist paths

42 Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides, Austroads

The Colac Otway Physical Activity and Open Space Strategies highlight the need to better connect residential areas to the Lake Colac Foreshore trails. Consultation for the master plan reinforces community aspirations for well linked walking and cycling routes to the township and residential areas.



A relative immediate opportunity to achieve this is via the Murray St. underpass trail that currently ends in the vicinity of the railway line. There is an opportunity to upgrade the trail in line with guidelines recommended in the master plan and to extend it to connect with nearby residential areas via the existing pathway or roadway network. These works will need to be accompanied by relevant pathway and road markings and signage.

If and when subdivision occurs in the vicinity of Rifle Butt Rd. (Zone 1) the master plan recommends that an exclusive bike lane be constructed along the Moore Street extension to service the secondary college and the new subdivisions, through to Deans Ck. Rd. This should be a minimum width of 1.5m within the 60km/h driving zone.

A number of requests were received in relation to the extension of the foreshore trail around the perimeter of the lake to the east to Meredith Park, and to the west beyond Deans Ck.. This has been flagged in the master plan for further consideration, however is not considered a priority at this time.

9.3.3 Signage

The style and condition of signage varies throughout the parklands and is generally very dated. The most modern signage is in the vicinity of the Tachyglossus mosaic. In some areas there is a clutter of signs, which do not add to the visual amenity of the area. The majority of signs are compliance related and some interpret landscape cultural features.

The need for directional, to and within the Foreshore, and distance signage was repeated throughout the consultation. People who walk, jog, or cycle for exercise were interested in distance signage along circuits that incorporated Foreshore pathways and local footpaths and streets.

There are a number of signs to Lake Colac from the highway, however these are small and often and easily overlooked. There is minimal signage along the roads leading to the Foreshore, and

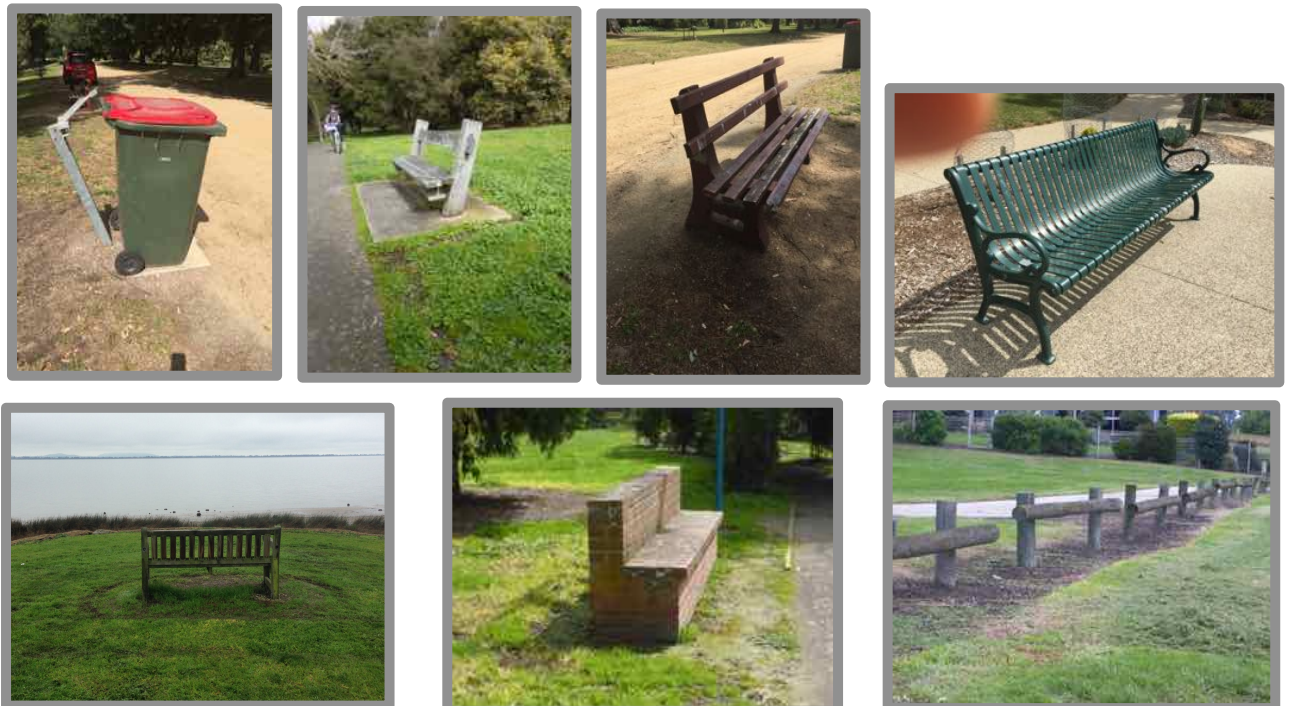
various vehicle and pedestrian entry points to the lake environs and viewing points are not well marked.

'Safer By Design Guidelines' highlight the importance of directional and distance signage and the Open Space Strategy designates that regional level parklands 'must have' information, directional and interpretive signage and linear open space corridors 'must have' information and directional signage and 'might have' interpretive signage.⁴⁴



9.3.4 Park furniture

Similar to other Foreshore infrastructure, the style and condition of park furniture varies throughout the Foreshore, including the Botanic Gardens and in most cases is of a basic style, and dated. Seats are made from a variety of materials but primarily timber. There does not



appear to be any regular placement of seats along trails and in most cases the distance between seats is greater than the 200-400 mts recommended in industry guideline documents.⁴⁵

Bollards and railings are generally made from treated pine and date from the 1980s, and in many areas have fallen into disrepair or have been vandalised.

The master plan recommends that bollards be replaced over time to improve the amenity of the parklands. The master plan identifies sites where replacement of bollards and barriers should occur as a priority, but consideration should be given to a gradual replacement as part of the parks maintenance program.

9.4 Landscape and Plantings

The different project zones and landscapes provide an opportunity to create / consolidate landscape and vegetation themes. There are opportunities to create or consolidate landscape themes throughout the parklands.

A number of proposed directions were tested during community consultation in relation to this. The following reflect directions that were commonly supported or that were raised and considered as viable opportunities.

Tree and vegetation plantings

- More shade trees, particularly along the Barongarook Ck. parklands and the foreshore pathway to Stodart St. West, where practical
- Shade trees in Western Bay Park
- The renewal of flowering gum plantings along Queens Av. And the embankment to create a colourful vista from the shoreline / lake and preserve the treed amenity along Queens Av.
- Cluster perimeter planting of trees (River Red Gums) on the Esplanade Park to provide shade and feature plantings. Cluster planting will preserve a large area for run-about play
- Planting of mature shade trees in Western Bay Park
- Maintain / enhance historic exotic tree plantings in lawn areas along the Barongarook Ck. corridor with native plantings in the immediate vicinity of the creek
- Screen plantings to break / screen the impact of adjoining properties e.g. motel, residential fenceline
- Optimise habitat plantings.

The barren former landfill site adjoins the project area. Although requested during consultation, is not possible to vegetate this site because of the need to preserve the integrity of the landfill cap.

In an attempt to create a visual distraction from the site and enhance the amenity of the zone, the master plan proposes to continue the cluster planting of River Red Gums along the maintenance track.

"A mix of Australian natives and exotic trees makes the Foreshore interesting and represents our environmental heritage."

Ref: Project meetings & 83% project survey respondents

Landscape Features

- Creative but cost effective landscape features that are low maintenance but make the zones different and interesting to pass through. Every effort should be made to create landscape features that are interesting and draw people into them such as climbable and playable rockscapes, grassy knolls, and edible plant gardens.

9.5 Public Art / Celebration / Recognition plates

In the 1980s a community project resulted in the installation of a number of modernistic and rustic artistic pieces in what became known as the Sculpture Park. The park is located alongside Barongarook Ck. in between Murray and Chapel St. Over the

"Public art projects will be most effective when they are part of a larger, holistic, multidisciplinary approach to enlivening a city or neighborhood."

Ref: Collaborative, Creative Placemaking

⁴⁵ e.g. Healthy By Design: A Planners' Guide to Environments for Active Living, Victorian Heart Foundation; Safe Design Guidelines for Victoria

years some of the pieces have been relocated and many of the remaining pieces have fallen into disrepair.

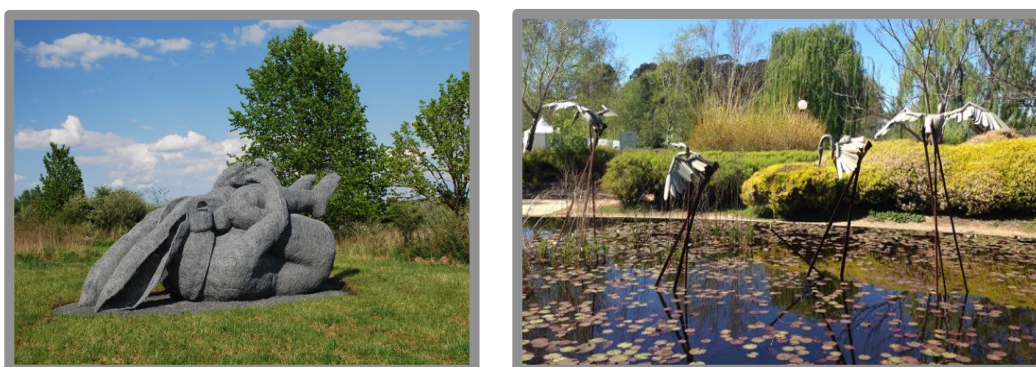
While community feedback largely supported the removal of the Sculpture Park installations, there was support for quality public artwork installations throughout the parklands. Quality public art installations that reflect local history, character and environment; encourage conversation and diversity of opinion; and included interactive elements were well supported. Further, many saw this as one of a number of key parkland features, if of a high standard, that could draw people to Colac⁴⁶.

There is an opportunity over time to strengthen the linear or pathway linkages through the



parklands and with the CBD with public art. In the shorter term the area referred to as 'the Dell' by Guilfoyle⁴⁷, which is located close to the main Foreshore Zone. This will extend activity opportunities available at easy walking distance from the main car park. The area has an existing raised walkway from which installations can be viewed in wet weather. At other times of the year visitors can more closely interact with installations.

The Open Space Strategy and the CBD and Entrances Master Plan recommend public art be incorporated in the CBD and regional parklands. The Open Space Strategy designates that artwork 'must be' incorporated into regional level parklands and 'might be' incorporated into regional level linear corridors such as along the Barongarook Ck. corridor.⁴⁸



46 In addition to a modern regional playspace, wetland / wildlife areas / features, and quality picnic facilities

47 from William Guilfoyle's redesign of the Colac Botanic Gardens and adjoining environments

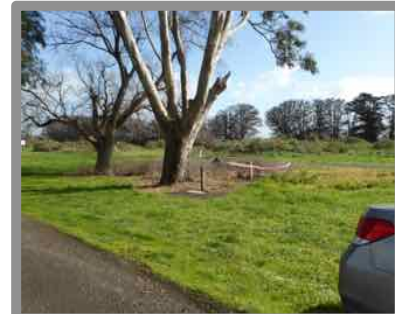
48 Colac Otway Open Space Strategy, p51

9.6 Maintenance and Amenity

There is an overwhelming desire by the community for the parklands to be presented to a higher standard than is occurring. This was generally expressed in terms of the standard and style of infrastructure, and the state of disrepair of infrastructure.

In terms of general maintenance project participants were divided as to their opinion on the appropriateness of maintenance standards. Generally speaking, basic maintenance was viewed as fair. However observation and feedback indicates the need for expanded maintenance regimes particularly in relation to pruning / removal of relevant vegetation; and removal of fallen and pruned tree branches.

Maintenance protocols relating to mowing in wet weather, spraying and removal of disused / vandalised infrastructure should be reviewed to ensure practices do not detract from parkland appearance.



The previous master plan recommended that spraying procedures be reviewed in order to minimise the unsightliness of vast areas of poisoned grass / dirt around trees and signs. Similar practices continue throughout the project area. Unfortunately changing management protocols can result if additional budget requirements, however alternative protocols should still be investigated.

The community recognise the significant works that council has undertaken along Barongarook Ck. and appreciate how works have improved the appearance of the parklands and environmental values. Maintenance standards will need to be reviewed to determine how maintenance can better reflect the regional status of the project area. This will be particularly relevant as environments and facilities are progressively renewed and upgraded.

The master plan recognises the significant costs associated with enhancing or replacing ageing and less attractive infrastructure such as broken and remedial repairs on lake retaining walls as in the vicinity of Ross Point; reinforcement of jetty embankments, old boat ramps and jetties.

In the longer term this will require separate and significant consideration given the change in recent weather events the significant cost involved. In the short term, other measures to enhance associated environments should be considered to improve the appearance of the parklands. These include tree and vegetation plantings, upgrading of park furniture, and enhancing infrastructure that will activate the parklands.



Old concrete mounded inspection pits are a common, and unattractive structure along the Barongarook Ck. parklands. The opportunity to replace these with less intrusive infrastructure, particularly in high profile locations such as the entry to the parklands off Murray St., should be investigated.

10 Landscape Concept Plans

10.1 Landscape Concept Plan Plates

Plate 00 – Plan of the Project Zones

Plate 1 – Zone 2: Rifle Butt Rd. to Stodart St. West

Plate 2 - Zone 2: Stodart St. West to Stodart St. East

Plate 3 - Zone 3: Stodart St. East to Armstrong St.

Plate 4 - Zone 4: Armstrong St. to Gellibrand St.

Inset 1 (Plate 4) – Gellibrand St. Car Park

Plate 5 - Zone 5: The Foreshore / Commons

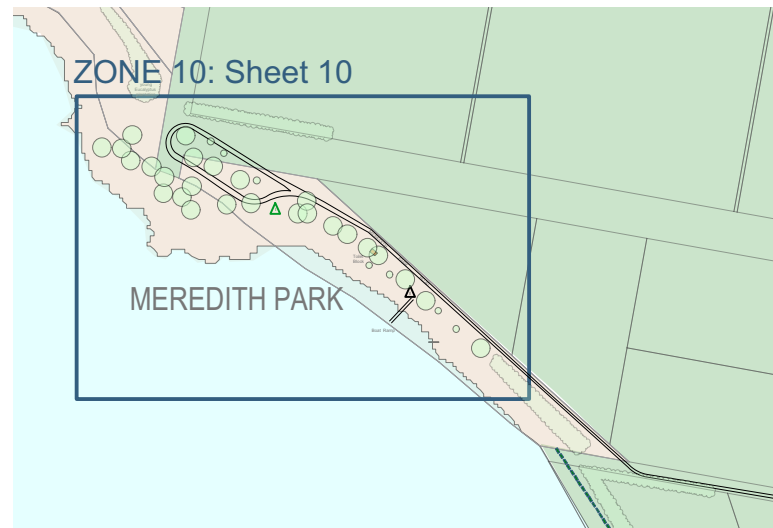
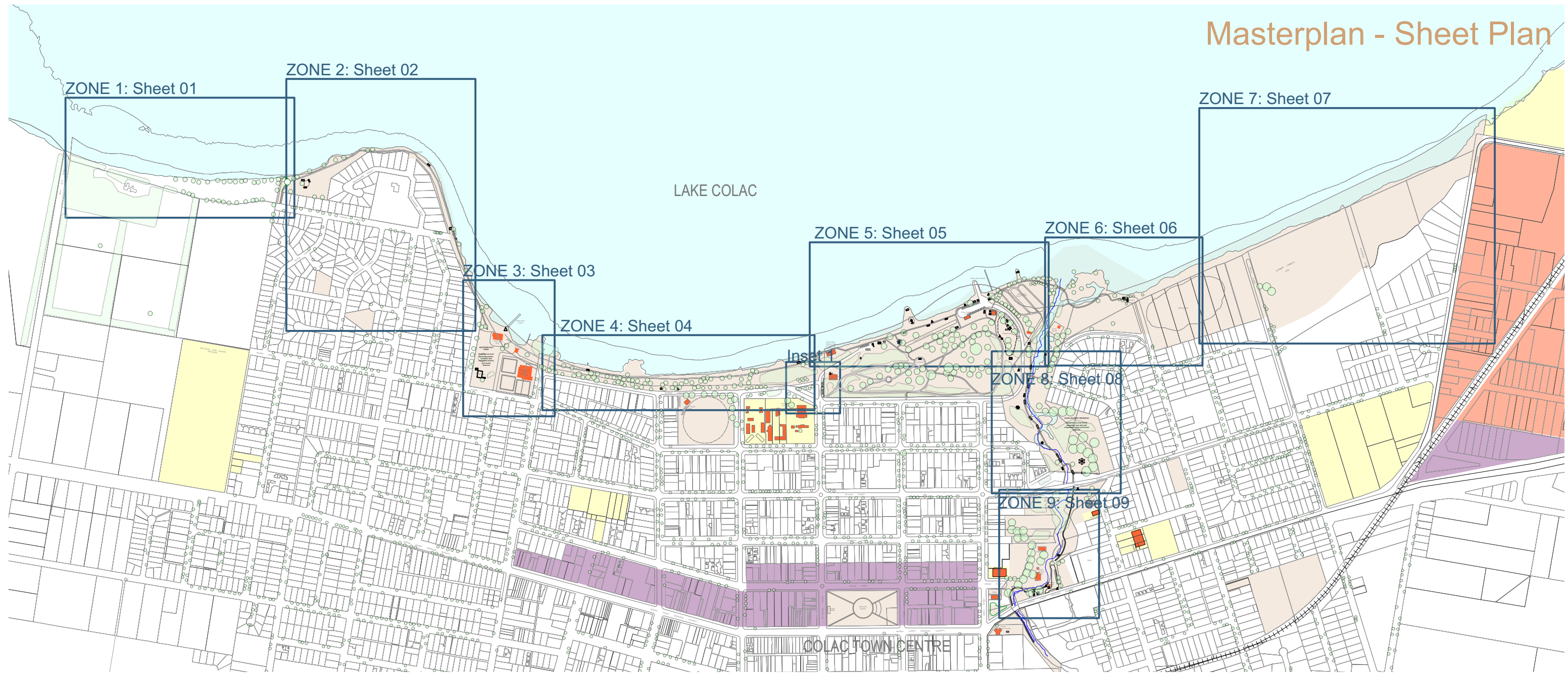
Plate 6 - Zone 6: The Esplanade and Wetlands to Bruce St.

Plate 7 - Zone 7: Bruce St. to Clark St.









Plate 8 - Zone 8: Lower Barongarook Ck. to Chapel St.

Plate 9 - Zone 9: Chapel St. to Murray St.

Plate 10 - Zone 10: Meredith Park



LEGEND

-  Creek
-  Zoned Public Park and Recreation
-  Zoned Public Use
-  Zoned Industrial
-  Zoned Commercial
-  Zoned General Residential
-  Zoned Farming
-  Vegetation
-  Tree
-  Building for Public Use