

## **2.1 OAKLEIGH COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE SCOPING PROJECT (KJ)**

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Oakleigh Community Infrastructure Scoping Project (the Project) is part of a strategic and planned approach to developing, managing and maintaining community infrastructure in Oakleigh. The Project has explored opportunities in Hughesdale, Oakleigh, Oakleigh East, Huntingdale, and Oakleigh South to improve the connection between community facilities, and the co-location and integration of services and infrastructure to better respond to community needs and aspirations. The Project has resulted in a number of recommendations to guide Council's future planning.

### ***PURPOSE***

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the final report of the Oakleigh Community Infrastructure Scoping Project for consideration.

### ***KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES***

A detailed list of recommendations that will guide Council's investment in community infrastructure in Oakleigh has been incorporated into this study. Recommendations include short, medium and long-term goals, recognising that budget decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. The recommendations are wholistic, achievable and will ensure that community infrastructure in Oakleigh meets both the community and Council's expectations for contemporary infrastructure and service delivery.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

An investment will be required from Council to action a number of the recommendations contained within this report; however, some recommendations will not require any financial input and can be achieved through current resourcing. For those that require a contribution, the normal budget process will be followed and external grants will be sought through relevant channels.

### ***CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION***

The provision of community infrastructure to enable individuals and groups to meet, socialise, learn and interact is a key role of Council. The Oakleigh Community Infrastructure Scoping Project provides direction for the provision and development of community facilities in and around Oakleigh based upon a strong evidence base and analysis and stakeholder engagement.

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council notes the Oakleigh Community Infrastructure Scoping Project report and endorses its recommendations.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the final report of the Oakleigh Community Infrastructure Scoping Project and to seek endorsement of the recommendations.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Oakleigh Community Infrastructure Scoping Project (the Project) is part of a strategic and planned approach to developing, managing and maintaining community infrastructure in Oakleigh.

The Project has explored opportunities in Hughesdale, Oakleigh, Oakleigh East, Huntingdale, and Oakleigh South to improve the connection between community facilities, and the co-location and integration of services and infrastructure to better respond to community needs and aspirations.

The Project consisted of:

- A review of key background information including priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of the community, the current and forecast demographic profile of the Oakleigh community, and the condition and use of existing community infrastructure.
- An examination of best practice models in the provision of community facilities.
- A program of consultation and engagement with the Oakleigh community, stakeholder organisations and Council officers. In addition, outcomes from previous consultation undertaken with the Oakleigh community have been examined.
- Identifying, exploring and testing options for the future provision of community infrastructure in Oakleigh.
- Preparation of a draft and final report.

**DISCUSSION**

The Project has primarily focused upon infrastructure owned by Council, but also considered opportunities to access and activate buildings and places owned by others, particularly those with a community focus or purpose. Key Council owned infrastructure considered as part of the Project includes:

- The Drummond Street precinct including Oakleigh Hall, Oakleigh Seniors Centre and Oakleigh Library
- Monash Training and Seminar Centre
- Oakleigh Youth Club
- Oakleigh Community Centre
- Federation Centre
- Kindergartens and preschools
- Monash Oakleigh Community Support and Information Service
- Open space

Community infrastructure owned by organisations other than Council that has been considered as part of the Project include:

- Oakleigh Masonic Centre
- Oakleigh Carnegie RSL
- St David's Uniting Church
- Link Health and Community.

The Project has identified other community infrastructure throughout Oakleigh and surrounds including open space, but those listed above have been the primary focus of the Project.

Key findings of the Project include:

**Oakleigh and the surrounding suburbs will experience substantial population growth** that will drive increased demand for community services, supports and infrastructure, particularly in Oakleigh itself, where population growth is expected to be highest. The highest increase in demand is expected for services and infrastructure to support:

- **Children aged 0 – 6 years** e.g. maternal and child health, kindergarten, childcare, playgroups and family support programs.
- **Young people aged 12 – 24 years** e.g. programs and services which support education, training and the health and wellbeing of young people.
- **Older adults aged 65 years and older** e.g. programs and services which support social inclusion and the health and wellbeing of older adults.

**Council has a strong commitment to delivering equitable and inclusive services and facilities for all community members.** This is particularly important with an increasing number of people from culturally diverse backgrounds, notable proportions of the community experiencing lower levels of wellbeing and higher levels of disadvantage, a high number of people living with a disability, and a rapidly increasing number of older adults in the area. Each of these factors highlight how critical it is for the community to have access to contemporary, inclusive, universally accessible community infrastructure, services and programs in Oakleigh and surrounds.

**Council is committed to co-locating services and infrastructure** to promote integration, improve service co-ordination and manage resources effectively, however in Oakleigh and surrounds, many buildings are single purpose. In some instances, it is important to retain single purpose facilities to minimise barriers to accessing services and supports. This is particularly important for services supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community, who may be intimidated by larger multipurpose facilities.

**Many of the community buildings owned by Council are aging and do not meet best practice guidelines.** Issues include that they are not universally accessible, lack functionality, have a poor aesthetic and cannot support contemporary service delivery. The community has identified that improving the accessibility of facilities and services is a key priority.

**A number of the Council-owned community halls could accommodate increased levels of utilisation.** Some receive moderate or low levels of use (excluding casual bookings), and/or receive extensive use weekdays but limited use on weekends and in the evening. Demand for community use is high on weekdays during working hours because they are largely used by groups which support older members of the community. Evening use is more likely to be of a commercial nature.

**Sporting pavilions are used primarily for sport related activity,** this means their use is low to moderate with almost no use occurring Monday to Friday during working hours. There is significant opportunity to increase the activation of these spaces for other community purposes, although additional capital and operational resources may be required to implement this.

**There is an undersupply of social / family recreation and local parks** in significant parts of Hughesdale, Oakleigh East / Huntingdale (north of Princes Highway), and parts of Oakleigh South particularly between Warrigal Road and the Metropolitan Golf Club.,

**CONSULTATION**

A range of consultation methodologies were implemented during the course of this study including surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with key internal and external stakeholders and the community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations include short, medium and long-term goals, recognising that budget decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. The recommendations are wholistic, achievable and will ensure that community infrastructure in Oakleigh meets both the community and Council's expectations for contemporary infrastructure and service delivery.

Recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Undertake planning to upgrade and improve the Oakleigh Mechanics Hall, Oakleigh Senior Citizens Centre, and Oakleigh Library, to provide integrated and shared contemporary facilities to support library services, community and social activities or groups, neighbourhood house activities, youth and middle years programs or supports, early years and health services.
- Investigate opportunities for shared use of sporting clubrooms for non-sporting activities, particularly when planning for the upgrade of existing facilities or the development of new sporting facilities. Consider the capital and operational resources required to support the shared use.
- Make the Oakleigh Activity Centre more accessible and welcoming for all members of the community e.g. informal seating, and formal or informal gathering spaces.
- Assess the ongoing viability of the Oakleigh Youth Club including volunteer capacity, safety and risk, extent of participation, community connections and impact, alternate service models, and suitability of the facilities for the activities occurring.
- Increase the walkability of Oakleigh and Hughesdale in particular:
  - Improve the walkability between Hughesdale and the Oakleigh activity centre, with a focus upon reducing the barriers created by Warrigal Road and the railway line.
  - Continue to improve the walkable connections between the railway station, Eaton Mall and the Drummond Street precinct including visual connections, and improved lighting.
- Review the appropriateness of car parking restrictions and traffic management around the Oakleigh town centre to ensure it is responsive to community needs.

- Implement initiatives which will help to 'green up' the Oakleigh town centre and enhance the neighbourhood character e.g. tree planting and 'greening up' the railway corridor.
- Consistent with the Monash Open Space Strategy, investigate opportunities to increase the availability, accessibility, and quality of open space for social / family recreation.
- Consistent with the Monash Early Years Infrastructure Plan, pursue initiatives which will provide contemporary early years facilities and services and / or to address the shortage of kindergarten places and spaces for playgroups.

An extensive table of recommendations is included within the attached report (page 5-8) (Attachment 1).

### ***POLICY IMPLICATIONS***

This Project aligns with the Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, increasing accessibility and providing opportunities for the community to connect, engage and thrive.

### ***SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

There are a number of social implications that have been considered during the development of this report; sense of community that comes with having a place to celebrate significant events and cultural heritage, enhancing social cohesion, ensuring that there is an appropriate mix of services for the diverse demographics and enhancing the built environment to encourage walking and promote green spaces.

### ***HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS***

Human rights principles of access and equity, all abilities, diverse communities, information and communication are articulated in this study and will guide its application.

### ***GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT***

A gender impact assessment has not been undertaken on this study as the study was undertaken prior to this being a requirement. However, when any of the recommendations that are associated with this study that incorporate policy, services or programs are undertaken, it will be determined if a gender impact assessment is required.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

An investment will be required from Council to action a number of the recommendations contained within this report; however, some recommendations will not require any financial input and can be achieved through current resourcing. For those that require a contribution, the

normal budget process will be followed and external grants will be sought through relevant channels.

***CONCLUSION***

The provision of community infrastructure to enable individuals and groups to meet, socialise, learn and interact is a key role of Council. The Oakleigh Community Infrastructure Scoping Project provides direction for the provision and development of community facilities in and around Oakleigh based upon a strong evidence base and analysis and stakeholder engagement.