

An aerial photograph of a suburban area with a mix of residential houses, green fields, and industrial buildings. A road runs along the bottom of the image. The title text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan Engagement Summary Report

Prepared for Hume City Council

September 2025

REALM studios

WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG COUNTRY

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

Prepared by:

REALMstudios

In collaboration with:



For:



BACKGROUND

Hume City Council is preparing a Masterplan for the Merlynston Creek Parklands.

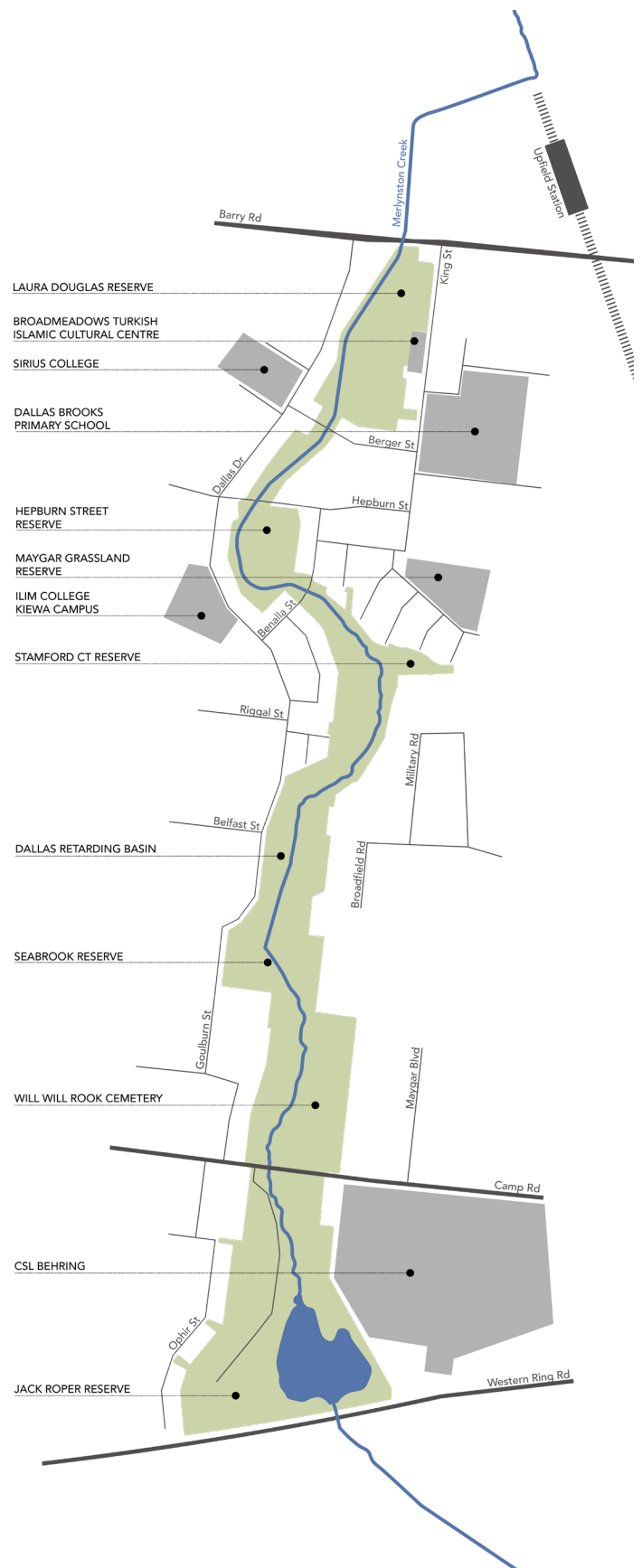
Merlynston Creek is the main green open space for people living in Dallas and Broadmeadows. It connects parks including Laura Douglas Reserve, Hepburn Street Reserve (Dallas Tennis Hall), Seabrook Reserve, Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery, and Jack Roper Reserve.

However, the Merlynston Creek Parklands lack continuous connected trails, many of the indigenous plants have been removed over time, and water quality in the creek is poor.

A Masterplan is needed to set the long-term strategic vision for the creek and embed ecological, waterway, cultural, heritage, access and community recreational values. It will guide future Council investment and identify priority projects.

Community engagement in July-Aug 2025 has been undertaken to inform the priorities of the upcoming Draft Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan.

Merlynston Creek Parklands is located wholly on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. The Masterplan will be developed in close liaison with the traditional custodians, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

From 24 July to 19 August 2025, consultation was used to understand preferences for future parkland outcomes along Merlynston Creek, and involved:

- **Online engagement** hosted on Participate Hume: two interactive maps and a survey.
- **On-site meetings:** four pop-up engagements at various locations and times along the creek. These were held at Laura Douglas Reserve, Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery, and Jack Roper Reserve.
- **Walk on Country** with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and commencement of a detailed Cultural Values Study to inform the Masterplan
- **Information session** hosted by Merri Creek Management Committee.
- **Meetings** with key stakeholders: Hume Sustainability Taskforce, Melbourne Water, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of Transport and Planning, Broadmeadows Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre, Friends of Will Will Rook Cemetery, Greek Orthodox Community of Broadmeadows, Dallas City Football Club, Coolaroo Hotel.
- **Individual letters** were sent to 16 landowners located adjacent to the parklands and most directly impacted.
- **Social media promotion** in English and translated into Turkish and Arabic.
- **12 signs** placed along the parklands and **posters** in English, Turkish and Arabic placed in community centres and playgrounds.
- **In person surveys** were undertaken with King Street traders, and with park visitors at Laura Douglas Reserve, Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery and Jack Roper Reserve
- **Community travel analysis** (Neighbourlytics) to help understand existing park users and patterns

Key Engagement Topics

Community engagement was structured to address:

- Merlynston Creek Parklands holistically
- Laura Douglas Reserve in detail

Feedback was sought on key topics, including:

- Naturalising the Creek
- Private Land Uses
- Hepburn Reserve and Dallas Tennis Hall
- Dallas Retarding Basin (Melbourne Water)
- Seabrook Reserve Community Centre
- Will Will Rook Cemetery
- Upfield Station Connection
- Camp Road Crossing
- Future Road Crossing at Dallas
- Laura Douglas Reserve upgrade

Responses

- » A total of 267 responses were received via in person surveys and online map surveys representing valuable snapshots of ideas from the community and stakeholders
- » Across Facebook and Instagram, via organic and paid promotion, the posts reached 11,251 people. All feedback was modest, with the highest being from the Turkish language post
- Meetings with stakeholders were detailed providing valuable input. Despite many efforts, no meetings were secured with the schools along the parklands
- Four traders at King Street provided input into Laura Douglas Reserve during street surveys.
- No directly affected landowners mailed (with follow up emails) responded.
- Written submissions received from Melbourne Water, Department of Transport and Planning, Friends of Merri Creek, and Merri Creek Management Committee.

FINDINGS SUMMARY

- » **Respondents** were primarily people who live near or regularly use the parklands with some additional responses from people in surrounding suburbs.
- » Support for stronger **integration of Aboriginal culture and naming** into the parklands, and ongoing consultation with Traditional Owners.
- » A large majority (87%) supported a **continuous walking and cycling trail** along the creek, with shorter loops for local use.
- » Strong support for future opportunities for **private land to be made public** to create a continuous parkland corridor and improved access.
- » Strong support for opening parts of the **Dallas Retarding Basin** to enable community trails and improved habitat.
- » Most respondents were supportive of **naturalising the creek**, with 81% 'strongly supportive' or 'supportive'.
- » High priority given to **upgraded play spaces, and more sitting and picnic areas**, particularly at Laura Douglas Reserve. Laura Douglas Reserve is often seen as 'unused land' by local residents with high opportunity to upgrade.
- » Community members expressed a strong desire for **improved safety, lighting, and amenities** (toilets, seating, picnic and BBQ areas, shade).
- » Support for **moving the off-leash dog park** away from Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery for biodiversity benefits
- » Concerns raised about potential **impacts of the proposed future road crossing** near Seabrook Reserve
- » Calls for **improved crossing at Camp Road**, with suggestions for traffic lights, pedestrian overpasses or bridges.
- » Desire to **redesign and re-purpose the bluestone toilet building** at Will Will Rook Cemetery for heritage and community use.
- » Concerns raised about **rubbish dumping, vandalism, and antisocial behaviour**, with requests for CCTV and better maintenance.
- » Support for **information and signage**, including wayfinding, heritage interpretation, and opportunities for volunteering and community activities.
- » External stakeholders highlighted the need for **stronger ecological protection**, integration with broader habitat corridors, and careful siting of new infrastructure to avoid impacts on remnant vegetation and threatened species.
- » **Movement data** shows low use of Merlynston Creek parklands due to low walkability and visitor attractions. This is especially so on weekends. Jack Roper Reserve has the most visitors. It also shows that most people coming to the area are from within 10km
- » **Community data** shows that the local residents are younger than the national average (32yo/38yo) and nearly double the national average for being born overseas (48/27%).

KEY FINDINGS SNAPSHOTS

Naturalising the Creek

Support for naturalisation of the creek

“perhaps focusing initially on a very high use area where it will be of most community benefit would be appropriate, potentially like Laura Douglas Reserve and in the vicinity of the new footbridge.”

“Should industrial stormwater remain a feature of inputs to the waterway then additional treatment such as toxicant traps should be considered...”

Connected walking and cycling trail along the whole length of the creek

“Providing a walk wall along the Creek will be such a pleasure to wander along.”

“would encourage people to get out more.”



Private Land Uses

Support for the creek land being part of the parklands

“For continuity of the parkland it would be best if it’s all public”

“I would use it to ride further north and explore the creek corridor with family. Many of them can’t or won’t ride on the roads”



Hepburn Reserve and Dallas Tennis Hall

Perceptions of safety:

“Path needs improvements”

“Poor lighting, secluded and dumped rubbish”

Use of the space:

Sports, general leisure, walking, sport.

Additional improvements:

Pathways, public sporting equipment, proper lighting, toilets, more native plants (naturalised) landscaping.

Dallas Retarding Basin

Strong support for Melbourne Water making parts of the Dallas Army Camp Retarding Basin open in areas to support public access along the creek. This includes additional paths and natural habitat through this area.

Circular images used during community consultation sessions to discuss opportunities for play, gathering, small markets and events. Creek Naturalisation: Blind Creek, by REALMstudios

Seabrook Reserve

Use of the space:

- › Family gatherings, playground and barbecues
- › Sporting facilities
- › Exercise and walking along the creek

Additional improvements:

- › Upgrade for larger community events near play
- › Improve bicycle pathways
- › Better connection to community centre
- › Change carpark to a continuous road

Future Road Crossing in Dallas:

- › Unclear about the proposed road design and felt it should be designed well.
- › Concerns from stakeholders about its design and proximity to the creek

“This proposal sits in stark contradiction with the themes that guide the remainder of the Masterplan of increased opportunity for community access, engagement and also for enhancement of natural and waterway values.”

Jack Roper Reserve

- › Improve amenity of trail link under M80 to Merri-bek
- › Improve entrances to reduce confusion
- › Support community uses and activities in adjacent land such as the Green Orthodox Community Centre.

Camp Road Crossing

- › Strong support for improving pedestrian safety and ability to cross Camp Road. This will connect the creek corridor and support high number of school students needing to cross.
- › Feedback from DTP has advised they recognised this need and will investigate the viability of future pedestrian lights at this location.

Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery

- › Friends of Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery actively support the care of the cemetery and its graves. They advise that the cemetery has many unmarked graves that need to be accounted for in all planning. Beautification is supported subject to sensitivity of unmarked and unknown graves, and the need for easy maintenance.
- › The relocation of the dog off-leash area would help protect biodiversity values of the cemetery. Avoiding low mowing will help too.
- › Turning into the carpark is difficult and feels unsafe.

Redesigning or re-purposing the bluestone toilet:

“...could be a sheltered seating area”



Will Will Rook Engagement Session. August 2025

Connecting to the creek source and to Upfield Station

- › Long term opportunity to continue the parklands to its source near the site known as National Business Park Nature Reserve. This unused rail corridor has immense ecological and cultural value within an industrial area. A future skyrail extension to reactivate the rail line needs to support biodiversity outcomes.
- › Connecting pedestrians to the Upfield Station is important. DTP emphasises the importance of the shared path connection on Barry Road from Laura Douglas Reserve.

“Connections, instead of creating gaps in the network”

“We should be aiming to provide wildlife corridors not more concrete”

Laura Douglas Reserve

Use of the space:

- › Sport
- › Play and family time
- › Exercise and walking

More visitor experiences:

- › Expanded space and infrastructure for leisure, including shade, play space, water, BBQs, picnic and seating area, and nature
- › Relocate or improve the playground to make it more visible and family friendly.
- › Need for better lighting and safety measures (including CCTV and gated play)
- › King Street traders seek outdoor seating, public toilet, reduction of litter and dumping.
- › Seek event space for their cultural festivals (eg Chaldian community)
- › The adjacent Broadmeadows Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre spoke of opportunities to reorient some of their outside activities to face the park – eg seating and gathering areas

‘People don’t use it now because of the way it is. It’s a waste. Nothing to look forward to coming here.’

Improved connections

- › Better continuous trails and paths along the creek to reach Jack Roper Reserve.
- › Emphasis for smaller enjoyable walking loops, especially when parents are waiting at training.
- › Support for additional footbridge

The addition of a footbridge would be a *“positive initiative that would better serve the community in allowing them to easily cross the creek where they currently cannot.”*



Football at Laura Douglas Reserve. August 2025

Circular images used during community consultation sessions to discuss opportunities for play, gathering, small markets and events.

Other Feedback

Upgraded facilities for growing community use

- › Soccer participation and young family numbers are rapidly increasing. Recently increased from 40 to 150 kids per week (including from 1 to 7 girls teams), with 300 kids forecast for 2026.
- › Strong calls for child-friendly parks, BBQs, toilets, and spaces for families.

Shared paths and trail continuity

- › Emphasis that the shared continuous path should be a top priority.
- › Connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists seen as essential.

Natural landscape and environment

- › Preference for more trees and shade. This includes native trees and flowers.
- › Requests to avoid unsuitable species (e.g. yuccas).
- › Considered approaches to water management

“there are opportunities for future habitat links with the Grey Box Woodlands via a small corridor of land between residential and industrial uses that is only blocked by a small section of carpark.”

Safety and amenity improvements

- › Strong concern by stakeholders about ecological and social impacts of proposed road crossing south of the Retarding Basin.
- › Fencing between bike track and playground for children's safety.
- › CCTV to deter vandalism.



Engagement outside Broadmeadows Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre. August 2025

Maintenance and dumping concerns

- › Illegal dumping of rubbish and food scraps seen as a persistent issue.
- › General concern about upkeep along the creek.

Additional facilities and upgrades

- › Suggestions for a dog park and child-friendly park.
- › Upgrade of Dallas Shopping Centre.
- › Creek development to improve visual appeal.

General concern and negativity

- › Need for better parks, playgrounds and public areas in Broadmeadows and Dallas to match the standards elsewhere. This was a strong message from the multicultural community.

General support and positivity

- › Several respondents expressed happiness and excitement about Council's proposals overall.

Signs and Posters

12 signs were installed along the length of the parklands.

Posters in English, Arabic and Turkish were installed in key community centres including Dallas Tennis Hall, Seabrook Community Centre, and Broadmeadows Community Hub. They were also installed in key playgrounds – Jack Roper, Laura Douglas, and Seabrook Reserve.



HUME CITY COUNCIL

Have your say on the Merlynston Creek Parklands

The Merlynston Creek Parklands include connecting parks such as:

- Laura Douglas Reserve
- Dallas Tennis Hall
- Seabrook Reserve
- Will Will Rook Cemetery
- Jack Roper Reserve.

We're developing a plan to make Merlynston Creek and its connecting parks more accessible and enjoyable for everyone in Broadmeadows and Dallas.

We want to hear your thoughts on what **trails, play areas, picnic spaces, nature and creek improvements** you would like to see, and what is important for your friends and family.

Share your feedback in person at one of our upcoming pop up events, or let us know your thoughts online before **Tuesday 19 August 2025**.

Scan the QR code to have your say and find out more about the upcoming pop-up sessions.

HUME CITY COUNCIL

HUME CITY COUNCIL

شارك برأيك في منتزهات Merlynston Creek

تتضمن منتزهات Merlynston Creek منتزهات متصلة مثل:

- محمية Laura Douglas
- قاعة Dallas للتنس
- محمية Seabrook
- مقبرة Will Will Rook
- محمية Jack Roper.

نحن نضع خطة لجعل Merlynston Creek والمنتزهات المتصلة بها أكثر سهولة ومتعة للجميع في Broadmeadows و Dallas.

نريد أن نسمع أفكارك حول المسارات ومناطق اللعب ومساحات التنزه والطبيعة وتحسينات الجداول الصغيرة التي ترغب في رؤيتها وما هو مهم لأصدقائك وعائلتك.

شارك تعليقاتك شخصياً في أحد الفعاليات المبنية القادمة أو أخبرنا بأفكارك عبر الإنترنت قبل الثلاثاء 19 آب / أغسطس 2025.

امسح رمز الاستجابة السريعة ضوئياً لإبداء رأيك ومعرفة المزيد حول الجلسات المبنية القادمة.

HUME CITY COUNCIL

HUME BELEDİYE MECLİSİ

Merlynston Creek ile ilgili görüşlerinizi bildirir Park Alanları

Merlynston Creek Park Alanları, aşağıdakiler başta olmak üzere bağlantılı parkları içerir:

- Laura Douglas Rezervi
- Dallas Tenis Salonu
- Seabrook Rezervi
- Will Will Rook Mezarlığı
- Jack Roper Rezervi.

Merlynston Creek ve bağlantılı parklarını Broadmeadows ve Dallastaki herkes için daha erişilebilir ve keyifli hale getirmek için bir plan oluşturuyoruz.

Patikalar, oyun alanları, piknik alanları, doğa ve derede görmek istediğiniz iyileştirmeleri, ayrıca arkadaşlarınız ve aileniz için önemli olan konularla ilgili düşüncelerinizi duymak istiyoruz.

Görüşlerinizi yaklaşan günlük etkinliklerimizden birinde şahsen paylaşın veya düşüncelerinizi **19 Ağustos 2025 Salı** gününe kadar bize çevrim içi olarak bildirin.

Görüşlerinizi bildirmek ve yaklaşan günlük oturumlar hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek için karekodu taratın.

HUME BELEDİYE MECLİSİ

Arabic | العربية

Turkish | Türkçe

Signs and posters installed throughout the parklands during community consultation: English, Arabic and Turkish