

# 5.0

## Community Engagement

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

 **267** A total of **267** responses were received representing valuable snapshots of ideas from the community and stakeholders across the key engagement topics.

 **11,250+** Across both Facebook and Instagram, via both organic and paid promotion the posts reached **11,251** people.

 **28** On Participate Hume's interactive online map, there were a total of **28** community pins with feedback.

 **4 sessions** Throughout the consultation period, **4** in person consultation sessions were set up at various points along the creek.

 **12 posters** **12 posters** in English, and translated into Turkish and Arabic, placed along the parklands

### Preliminary Engagement consultation 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 Pioneer 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 Pioneer Cemetery
- Upfield Station Connection
- Camp Road Crossing
- Future Road Crossing at Dallas
- Laura Douglas Reserve upgrade

*"The local cemetery should be enhanced with grassland wildflowers and biodiversity (similar to projects underway in Melbourne General Cemetery) these areas could bring value and respect to the heritage values of the landscape and the name 'Broad Meadows' which was given for these beautiful grasslands.*

- Local resident

*"Improve the natural values and visual appeal of the area which would encourage residents to treat the creek better, potentially reducing pollution and dumping.*

- Local resident

*"I often walk alongside the creek and I as well as many others would benefit from a formal walking/cycling path.*

- Local resident

*"(A path network) Would be a fantastic addition to the creek's rehabilitation, whilst assisting more people and Hume residents to use the path along the river as a green corridor, a great alternative to roads. Especially for Bike riders, joggers, people pushing prams or walking dogs!*

- Local resident

## Summary of findings

### CREATING A CULTURAL PLACE...

- Support for stronger **integration of Aboriginal culture and naming** into the parklands, and ongoing consultation with Traditional Owners.
- Support for **information and signage**, including way-finding, heritage interpretation, and opportunities for volunteering and community activities.

### CREATING A ECOLOGICAL PLACE...

- Strong support for future opportunities for **private land to be made public** to create a continuous parkland corridor and improved access.
- External stakeholders highlighted the need for **stronger ecological protections**, integration with broader habitat corridors, and careful siting of new infrastructure to avoid impacts on remnant vegetation and threatened species.

### CREATING A WATERWAY PLACE...

- Most respondents were supportive of **naturalising the creek**, with 81% 'strongly supportive' or 'supportive'.
- External stakeholders highlighted the need for **stronger ecological protections**, integration with broader habitat corridors, and careful siting of new infrastructure to avoid impacts on remnant vegetation and threatened species.

### CREATING A COMMUNITY RECREATION PLACE...

- Community members expressed a strong desire for **improved safety, lighting, and amenities** (toilets, seating, picnic and BBQ areas, shade).
- High priority given to **upgraded play spaces, and more sitting and picnic areas**, particularly at Laura Douglas Reserve.
- Concerns raised about potential **impacts of the proposed future road crossing** near Seabrook Reserve
- Concerns raised about **rubbish dumping, vandalism, and antisocial behaviour**, with requests for CCTV and better maintenance.

### CREATING A HERITAGE PLACE...

- Support for **moving the off-leash dog park** away from Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery.
- Desire to **redesign and re-purpose the bluestone toilet building** at Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery for heritage and community use.

### CREATING A CONNECTED PLACE...

- A large majority (87%) supported a **continuous walking and cycling trail** along the creek, with shorter loops for local use.
- Calls for **improved crossing at Camp Road**, with suggestions for traffic lights, pedestrian overpasses or bridges.

## In-person community stakeholder sessions



Promotional posters in different languages.



Community engagement session at Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery.



Community engagement session #1 at Laura Douglas Reserve.



Community engagement session #2 at Laura Douglas Reserve.



Reference images used to support community conversations. Some children drew hearts to show their support for playspace improvements.



Informal community activities occurring within the parklands and shared during community engagement sessions.