



**Merri-bek**  
City Council

# Community feedback summary

## **Reaburn Reserve - Stormwater harvesting system and raingarden**

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek.



REABURN RESERVE - VIEW OVER RAINGARDEN TO VICTORIA STREET

# Community feedback summary

## Reaburn Reserve - Stormwater harvesting system and raingarden

This report provides an overview of the community engagement activities and feedback received relating to the Concept plan for the Reaburn Reserve Stormwater harvesting (SWH) system and raingarden.

### About the project

Merri-bek City Council is committed to becoming a Water Sensitive City. Our Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 (Endorsed 2020) outlines outcomes for achieving healthy waterways and resilient and liveable landscapes. As part of this strategy and the five-year Action Plan we are exploring opportunities for cooling and greening across the City and treating stormwater where possible.

The 5-year Action Plan includes the construction of large-scale stormwater harvesting (SWH) systems as a priority and identifies AG Gillon Reserve as a site for one of these systems. Reaburn Reserve has been identified as providing the best opportunity for a large-scale system in the local Brunswick Central Parklands area. Harvested stormwater will be used to irrigate AG Gillon Reserve and surrounding parks.

We have developed a concept plan for improvements to Reaburn Reserve in Brunswick, including a stormwater harvesting system which would redirect stormwater from local streets. The water would go through a raingarden for treatment and storage. The treated water can then be used to irrigate our parks in our neighbourhood and save up to 24.4 Mega litres of drinking water each year.

In March 2023 we asked for your feedback on the concept plan. This document provides a summary of what we heard.

### Background

The concept plan for this project is informed by the wider consultation we did in 2020-21 on the Brunswick Central Parklands project.

During this consultation we heard from the community that Reaburn Reserve is under used, and that the community would like to see:



We incorporated this feedback into the concept plan, and we asked you to complete a short survey to tell us what you liked about the plan and if you had any concerns with the proposal.

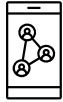
The summary of your survey responses is included below.



## How we engaged



5000 letters sent to local addresses within a 500-meter radius of the project site



1 Facebook advertisement promoting the survey, reaching 1813 people who live in and visit the area.

2 Facebook Events with detail of the in-person pop up events.



2 in person pop-up events were held on site, Wednesday 1 March and Friday 3 March 2023



Conversations Merri-bek - Online Survey – 45 responses were received



Installation of posters on site with the concept plan, details of the 'pop-up' in-person sessions and contact details of a Council representative.

## Community feedback on the Concept plan

### Summary of online survey responses

We received a total of 45 responses to the online survey.

#### **1. We asked you to tell us how you use Reaburn Reserve.**

The responses indicated that the park supports a range of recreational uses.

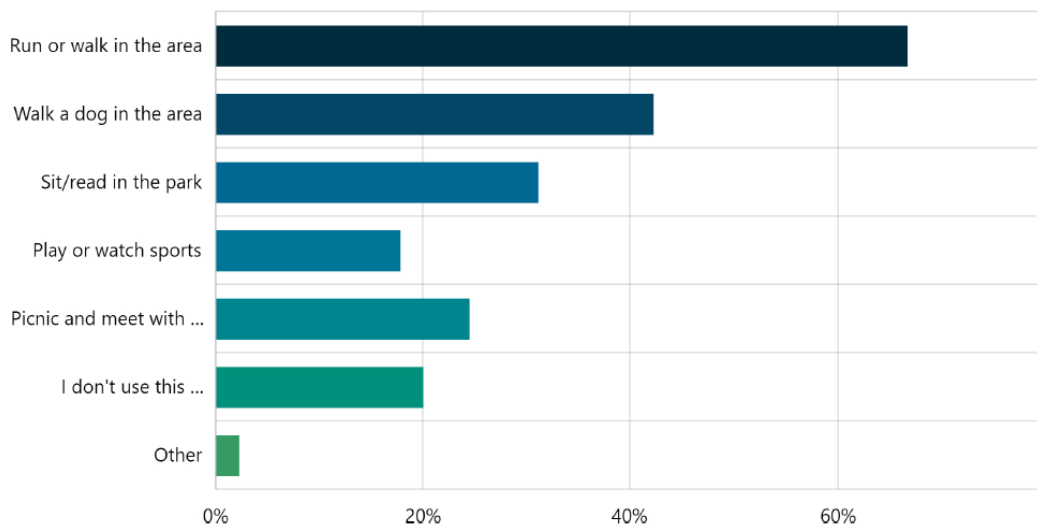
You told us that these are the top 3 ways you use Reaburn Reserve:

- Run or walk in the area (30 count) (67%)
- Walk a dog in the area (19 count) (42%)
- Sit/read in the park (14 count) (31%)

20% responded that they do not currently use this space much

(This question allowed for the selection of more than 1 response.)

**1. Tell us how you use this space. Select all that apply to you.**  
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 45 (100%)

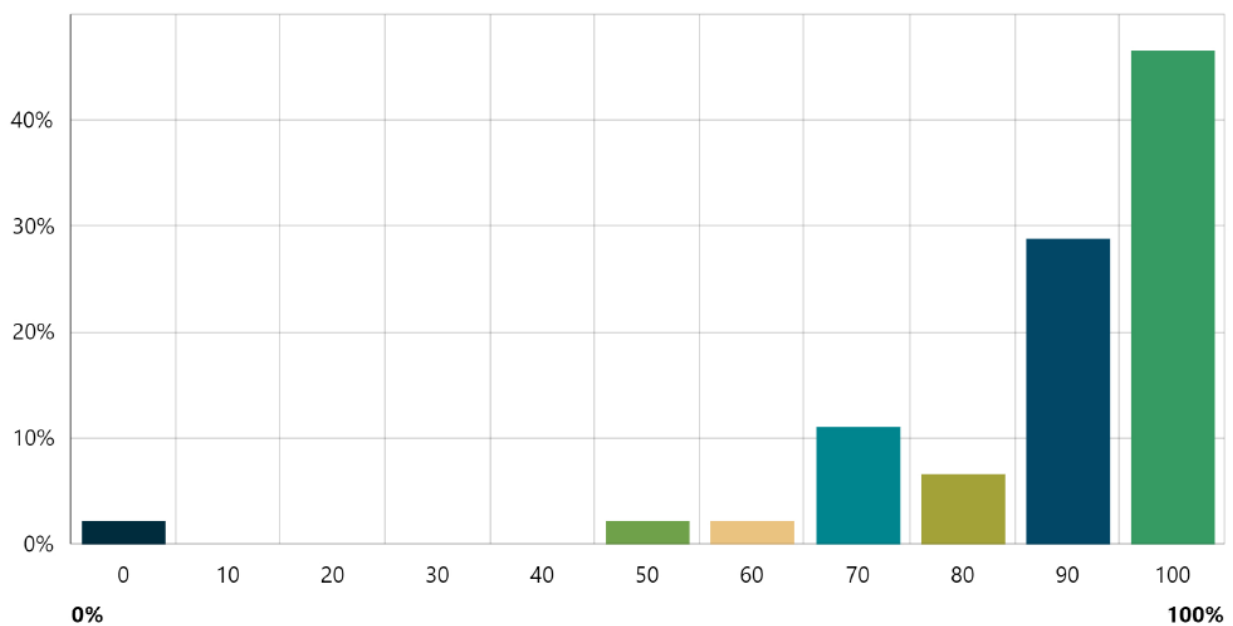


**2. We asked you to rate the proposed concept plan.**

There was a high level of support shown for the concept plan.

The plan received an average rating of 88%.

**2. How do you rate the proposed concept plan? Required**  
Slider | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 45 (100%)



**3. We asked what you most liked about the proposed plan.**

There was support for all elements of the concept plan. The top 3 responses were:

- Sustainability and biodiversity elements of the plan (27%)
- The Raingarden (23%)
- The new trees (20%)

#### **4. We asked if you have any concerns with the proposed concept plan**

We received a broad range of detailed feedback. Common themes included:

- Both concern and support for access and management of dogs in the reserve
- Establishment and protection of Habitat and Biodiversity
- Water safety for children
- Mosquitos around water
- Management of water quality for irrigation
- Public Lighting
- Open Space Maintenance (current and ongoing)
- Reduced Open Space without infrastructure

We have responded to key concerns in our Frequently Asked Questions. See Appendix on page 7.

#### **Other feedback received**

In addition to the feedback collected via Conversations Merri-bek, 10 emails were received.

The pop-up events in Reaburn Reserve were attended by approximately 5 people.

The questions and themes which came through in the emails and in person discussions were consistent with the common themes discussed in the survey.

#### **Feature comments**

"I think the designers have done a good job of keeping some open grass area whilst adding more. It currently does feel like an exposed corner despite the fence and level difference"

"The space is ripe for rejuvenation, and often floods, so this seems like an excellent plan."

"This will be an awesome change. It's such a blank space at the moment and the drainage is terrible, it's like a bog. Breaking it up into zones and having more shade and indigenous planting as well as the rainwater harvesting will be so much better."

"It's great to see such exciting plans to improve amenity and water harvesting capacity. Especially love the increased tree coverage proposed for Reaburn Reserve. Only feedback from us would be to look at increasing the gathering space at Reaburn to include a few picnic tables and BBQ facilities."



## Changes to draft plan following consultation

Below are the recommendations made following community consultation:

- The pump shed location has been repositioned between the tennis court and Victoria Street, following feedback from residents.
- The shape of the raingarden has been slightly adjusted based on internal consultation to provide better access for maintenance vehicles and pedestrians.
- A water body (sedimentation basin) has been added to improve ongoing maintenance of the system and to create a relaxing water feature for visitors to enjoy.



## Next steps

Following community consultation, the detailed design is underway. Once the design is finalised, we will apply for internal and external funding.

Construction will commence once funding approval has been granted. We anticipate this will be between 2024-2026.

To stay informed visit <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/gilpin-park-swale-and-wetland>, and click the +Follow button.

**+ FOLLOW**



# Appendix A

## Frequently Asked Questions – Reaburn Reserve Swale and Wetland

### 1. How did this project come about?

Merri-bek City Council is committed to becoming a Water Sensitive City.

Our Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 (Endorsed 2020) outlines outcomes for achieving healthy waterways and resilient and liveable landscapes.

The concept design has been informed by consultation undertaken in 2020-2021 for the Brunswick Central Parklands Masterplan project.

During this consultation we heard from the community that Reaburn Reserve is under used, and that the community would like to see:

- more trees
- more shade
- more nature and diversity
- A non-potable water supply for irrigation to green surrounding open spaces

For more details on what we heard, you can view the Brunswick Central Parklands Consultation Summaries in the Document Library.

### 2. What is a raingarden and how does it work?

The large raingarden will capture and treat stormwater from surrounding streets. This water will be used to irrigate local parks and open spaces before it eventually enters Moonee Ponds Creek.

A raingarden is a specially designed garden bed which filters and cleans stormwater. The raingarden is positioned so that water runoff from downpipes, roadsides, driveways, and other hard surfaces flows into the raingarden. Once in the raingarden, the water can infiltrate down through the soil, slowing down the movement of the water and filtering out pollution in the process.

The treated water can then flow through pipes below the raingarden back into the main stormwater system, or into a water tank for collection. This is called stormwater harvesting.

Raingardens can be any shape or size to suit the location or needs of the project. They are constructed with layers of soil for filtration, gravel for drainage and plants that can tolerate both extreme wet and dry conditions.

Raingardens help to protect our creeks and rivers by replenishing groundwater, reducing the stormwater intensity, and improving water quality.

A raingarden incorporates a variety of native plants that have been specially selected for their ability to treat polluted stormwater biologically. These plants form the 'first line of defence' by trapping suspended sediments in the soils where heavy metals and contaminants bind to the soils and, over time, degrade and become harmless. The plants also absorb some of the nutrients and water for their own growth which assists in reducing the nutrient load and transferring water through the landscape via evapo-transpiration.

The soil used within the raingarden forms the 'second line of defence'. Microbes living within the surrounding soils, good algae and micro-organisms living on plant roots all work to clean the stormwater. This cleaning function occurs as these organisms take in water and absorb the nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) for their own growth, hence protecting natural waterways from these excess loads.

As the stormwater infiltrates the soils, sediments and gross pollutants are further trapped before the water enters the drain connected to the raingarden. This drain then directs the treated stormwater back into the stormwater system and on to the nearest Creek.

### **3. How will the harvested water be used?**

The water, filtered through the raingarden, will be piped into water storage tanks. This harvested and treated water will be used to irrigate parks and open space in the neighbourhood including:

- Reaburn Reserve
- A G Gillon Oval
- Brunswick Park
- Clifton Oval
- Gilpin Park

This project will save up to 24.4 Mega litres of drinking water per year by using harvested stormwater for irrigation instead of drawing from the mains water supply.

### **4. Where will the water come from?**

The raingarden and underground tank will treat stormwater runoff from a catchment area of approximately 30 hectares. The runoff will come from residential properties and roads extending north as far as Hope Street.



## **5. What pollutants will be removed from the stormwater?**

Pollutants such as Phosphorus, Nitrogen and suspended solids will be removed from the stormwater as it moves through the raingarden.

The treated water from the raingarden then will be further treated by Ultra-violet (UV) disinfection for irrigation of the local sports fields and park lands.

## **6. What is UV disinfection?**

Ultra-violet (UV) disinfection systems use UV light lamps to inactivate and destroy bacteria, viruses, and mold spores. Unlike chemical treatments, the process of UV disinfection is environmentally friendly.

## **7. Why has this location been selected for the raingarden?**

We heard from the community that Reaburn Reserve is lacking in shade and interest and does not have a clear purpose. The community enjoy the availability of this space as an off-leash dog park and would like to see more trees, planting and nature in the local area.

Locating the raingarden in Reaburn Reserve enhances the local biodiversity and provides a complementary use to existing recreational uses.

The proposed location of the raingarden on the south side of the reserve has been carefully investigated by our stormwater experts. This location has suitable existing conditions to achieve the best natural filtration of the stormwater.

The location:

- is relatively flat
- has good access for construction and on-going maintenance
- is close to where the water can be used after it is harvested, to irrigate parks and open space.
- is large enough to accommodate a large raingarden and an underground storage tank
- has a stable urban catchment upstream which is of a good size
- does not contain other underground services (gas, electricity, telecommunications, etc.) which would cause conflicts for development.

## **8. Can I still walk my dog/s in Reaburn Reserve?**

Yes, absolutely.

The Park is currently designated by Merri-bek's Local Laws as a dog off-leash area.

Temporary fencing will be used to keep dogs out of the raingarden while the plants and vegetation establish.

Once vegetation is established, we will remove the temporary fencing.

## **9. When will this project be constructed?**

Following feedback from the community, followed by the completion of the detailed design of the stormwater harvesting, Council will then seek external grant funding for the construction of the system. Once the budget is confirmed, we will then go to tender for the construction of the project. It is anticipated that work will begin around 2025-2027 (subject to external funding). The bulk earthworks will take approximately 9 months and the plant establishment up to 2 years.

## **10. Will it be safe for children and dogs?**

The Reserve is a shared public space and is designated as an off-leash dog area.

The design of the wetland will be in line with Melbourne Water's design guidelines. These guidelines include safety measures for public space. Shallow ponding depths, gentle batter slopes and dense vegetation along the edges of the water will create safe edges and reduce risks of children entering the water.

The off-leash conditions will continue to apply in the park. If dogs are not under effective control as required by Council's local laws, those dogs are not allowed to be off leash in this shared public space. These conditions are in place to protect other people and animals in shared public space.

Visit [Conditions for using off-leash dog areas](#) for more information.