

Western Community Cycling Hub Submission
to Maribyrnong Council
Hansen Reserve Draft Master Plan



Prepared by Western Riders, Promoting Cycling in the Inner West

<https://www.facebook.com/sunsetvelodrome/>

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Executive Summary

Maribyrnong Council have called for community input into the development of a Master plan for Hansen Reserve West Footscray and this submission proposes a focus on cycling in the Master Plan. Cycling was a very popular pastime during the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century with many clubs forming in the western suburbs. During this period, the Footscray Velodrome was constructed in Hansen Reserve in the mid-1930s and existed until the mid-2000s when the top layer was removed after a failed re-surfacing attempt. Despite this approximately 70% of the banking of the cycling track still exists and the area is unspecified open space.

The removal of the Footscray velodrome has led to a complete absence in cycling facilities for the whole of the western suburbs as compared to the north, east and south of Melbourne that have many clubs and extensive facilities.

Cycling participation levels are declining in Australia, however, research suggests there is a large latent demand for cycling. While Australians are cycling less they are also doing less physical activity with more than 1 in 2 Australians not meeting their recommended daily amounts of physical activity. This is leading to increased burden of disease such as cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes. Due to the rapidly increasing population in the western suburbs, these issues will escalate if not addressed. Increasing cycling participation rates can help tackle this massive health burden, but only if people feel safe and confident to cycle and it is easy and convenient.

The vision of a Western Community Cycling Hub in Hansen Reserve West Footscray for all ages and abilities that incorporates a cycling education centre and velodrome would fill a large gap in community infrastructure in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Infrastructure of this type would be even more successful if complemented by programs for young people and education courses for riding skills and bicycle maintenance as well as provide another festival venue to capitalise on Maribyrnong Council's reputation in this area.

The WCCH would increase engagement, physical activity (better health) and skill development for people of all ages. Such projects help build community and foster social inclusion as well as encourage the 60% of people to cycle who are interested but concerned.

The redevelopment of Hansen Reserve provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to increase engagement and activity of Maribyrnong residents in a fun and exciting way which would benefit everyone. Such a venue, incorporating a velodrome and bicycle education facilities in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne would provide a physical base and cycling hub for the broader region and many stakeholders. A community cycling hub would provide ongoing benefits to the cycling and broader community of the Western Suburbs and beyond for decades to come. Such a facility would benefit a large section of our local community and provide for family, club, and school based opportunities, as well as skill development, general health benefits and social inclusion.

Introduction

The redevelopment of Hansen Reserve is a once in a lifetime opportunity to address the issue of youth and women cycling participation rates and the wider issues that are associated with that, e.g. decreasing physical activity levels and increasing health issues such as Type 2 diabetes.

Cycling was a very popular past time during the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century with many clubs forming in the western suburbs. During this period, the Footscray Velodrome was constructed in Hansen Reserve in the mid-1930s and existed until the mid-2000s when the top layer was removed after a failed re-surfacing attempt. Despite this approximately 70% of the banking of the cycling track still exists and the area is unspecified open space.

Currently there are no cycling facilities between Brunswick and Geelong and this lack effectively provides a barrier to large sections of the community from getting on their bikes. However, this can be transformed with the redevelopment of Hansen Reserve. Hansen Reserve can become home to a community-cycling hub consisting of a bicycle education centre surrounded by a cycling track or velodrome. This would address many of these issues with infrastructure and inclusive programs that can encourage more people of all ages, abilities and genders to take up cycling and enjoy its many benefits. A multipurpose community-cycling hub can cater for many stakeholders including schools and sporting clubs and fits with several local government strategies.

History and Demand

History

In the western suburbs cycling tracks were found at Yarraville Oval (the banking is still extant), the Western Reserve (now Whitten Oval) as well as Digman Reserve, Newport amongst numerous others. A dedicated cycling track was built in the 1930s in the south-western corner of Hansen Reserve in West Footscray adjacent to the quarry and landfill site. The original plan for the ¼ mile velodrome with its unusual circular design (a similar circular velodrome is still extant in Cairns) was drawn up by the curator of the reserve, David Matthews, as shown in Figure 1 which also shows the edge of the already existing quarry.

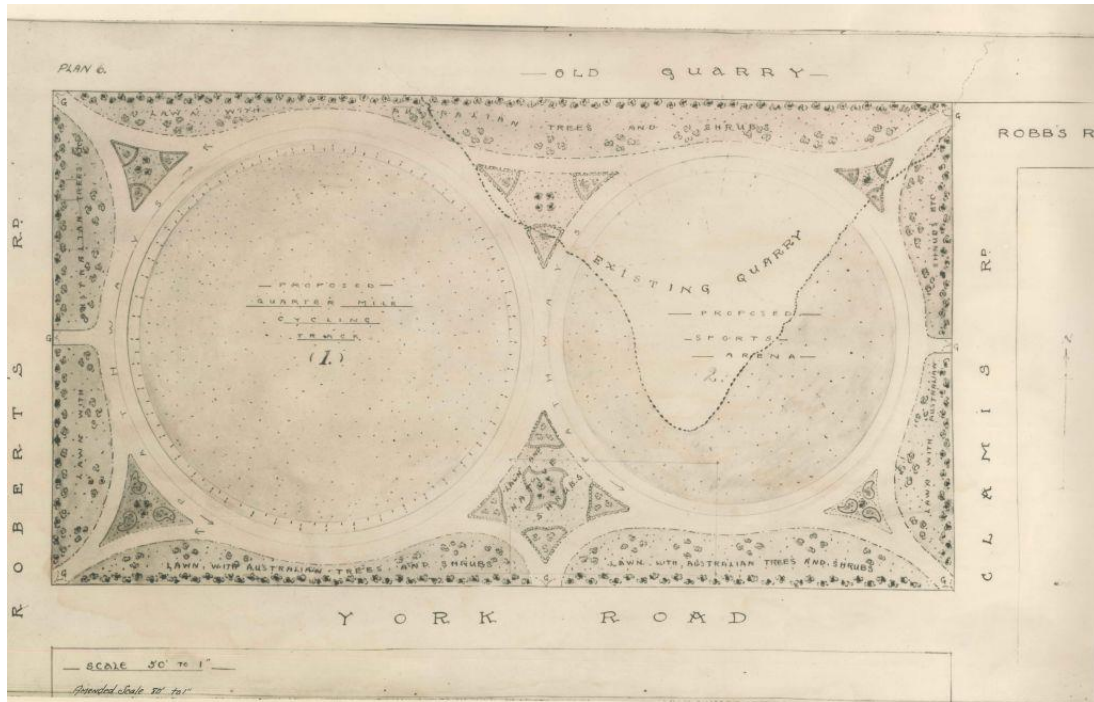


Figure 1: Original Plan for the Footscray Velodrome in Hansen Reserve

The cycling track in Hansen Park is shown in Figure 2 from the 1946 City of Footscray Annual Report while an aerial photograph from 1945 and 2016 are shown in Figure 3.



Figure 2: Footscray Velodrome in Hansen Reserve 1946



Figure 3: Aerial view of Hansen Reserve 1945, 2016 (1945.Melbourne)

The banking from the Hansen Reserve Cycling Track is still extant for approximately 70% of the site (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: Footscray Velodrome banking in Hansen Reserve

However, after World War 2, cycling declined in popularity for various reasons including the increased availability and affordability of cars and suburban sprawl increasing travel distances. Cycling reached its nadir in the 1970s and 1980s with few people using cycling for transport or participating in cycling as a sport and the cycling tracks around the football ovals mostly disappeared with some exceptions e.g. Parkfield Reserve, Noble Park, Castlemaine and Geelong.

Demand and Supply

In the mid-1990s cycling slowly began to regain its popularity and this accelerated in the 2000s. As evidence from the census journey to work data from 2001, 2006 and 2011 that show the inner north

and inner west in particular have shown a significant increase in the popularity of cycling, however, this increase is uneven with some groups increasing in participation rates and nearly all others decreasing (ABC, 2017). The overall result is a decline in cycling participation rates across Australia.

However, there exist large differences in cycling infrastructure between the inner north and inner west of Melbourne. As well as many cycle paths, the northern part of Melbourne is home to Coburg Velodrome, Brunswick Velodrome, Preston Velodrome and the Darebin International Sports Centre (DISC) indoor velodrome. The northern suburbs are also home to the Coburg Cycling Club, Brunswick Cycling Club, Preston Cycling Club, Northcote Cycling Club, the Italo Australian Cycling Club and the Melbourne University Cycling Club. After the disbandment of the Footscray Amateur Cycling Club, the western suburbs is home only to Footscray Cycling Club (Figure 5). However, due to Footscray Cycling Club's history as a professional club, they do not accept juniors, although they are considering changing this. This means that presently there are no clubs for people under the age of 17 in the 80kms between Brunswick and Geelong.

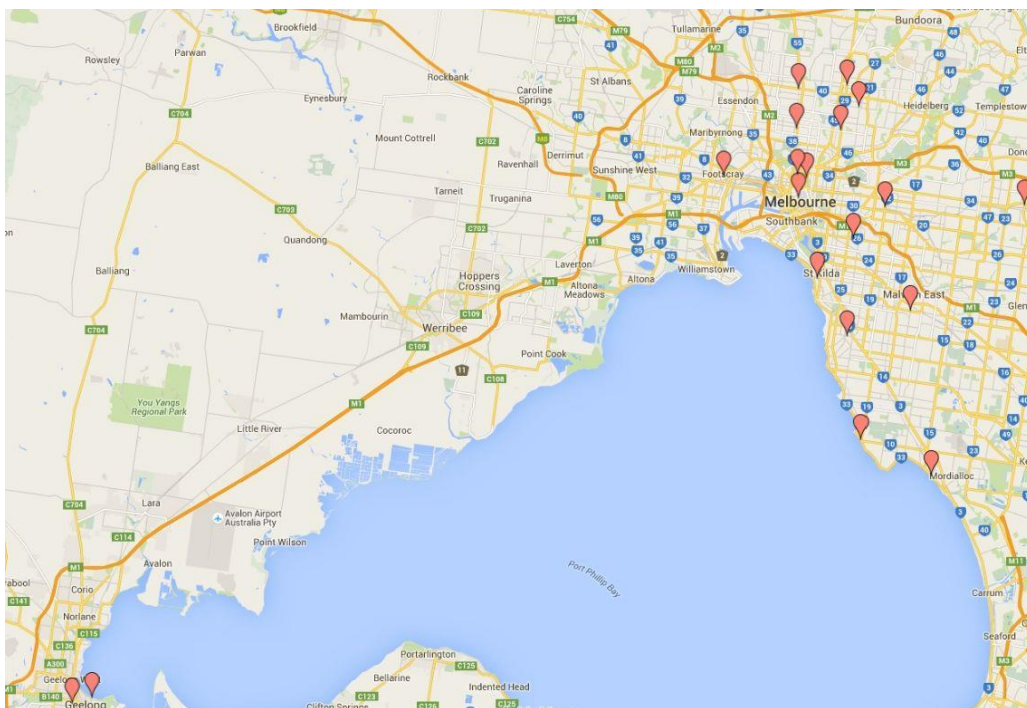


Figure 5: Cycling Clubs in Melbourne and Geelong

In addition, Maribyrnong council removed the Hansen Reserve Cycling Track in the 2000s after it fell into disrepair following an unsuccessful surface renewal leaving no cycling venues in the western suburbs of Melbourne (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Velodromes in Melbourne East and West

Cycling Activity Levels in Victoria

The National Cycling Participation Survey asked whether the respondent had cycled in the past year, month or 7 days (Figure 7). The results from this survey have been labelled “embarrassing” by the CEO of Bicycle Network Craig Richards as the National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016 aimed to double participation to 36% by 2016. The results for those who cycled in the past week in Victoria are shown in Figure 8 and are also concerning. This is especially the case for teenage girls whose participation levels dropped by nearly 50% between 2015 and 2017. Others have increased marginally such as young adult males and females, but even the so-called MAMILs (middle-aged men in lycra) have decreased in participation.

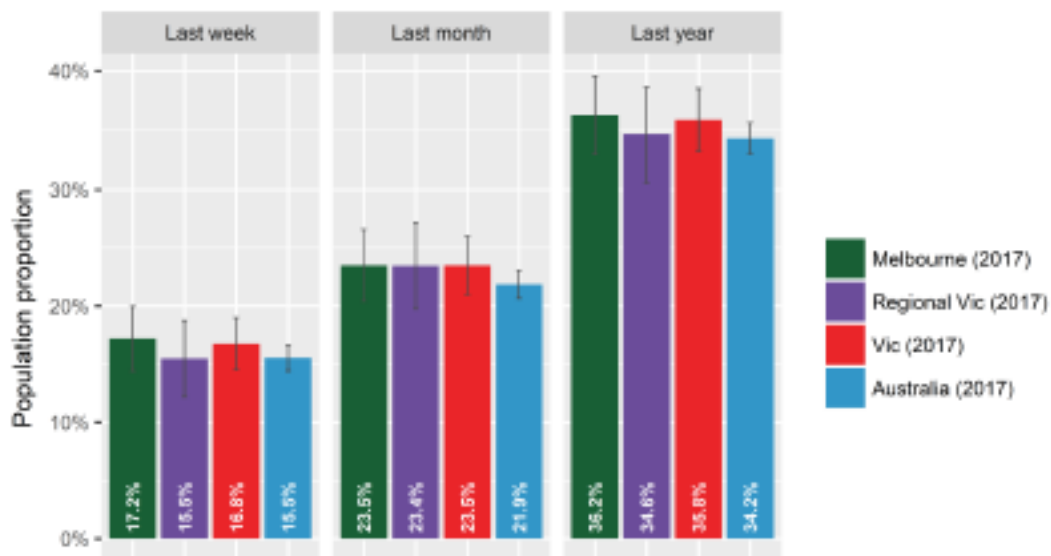
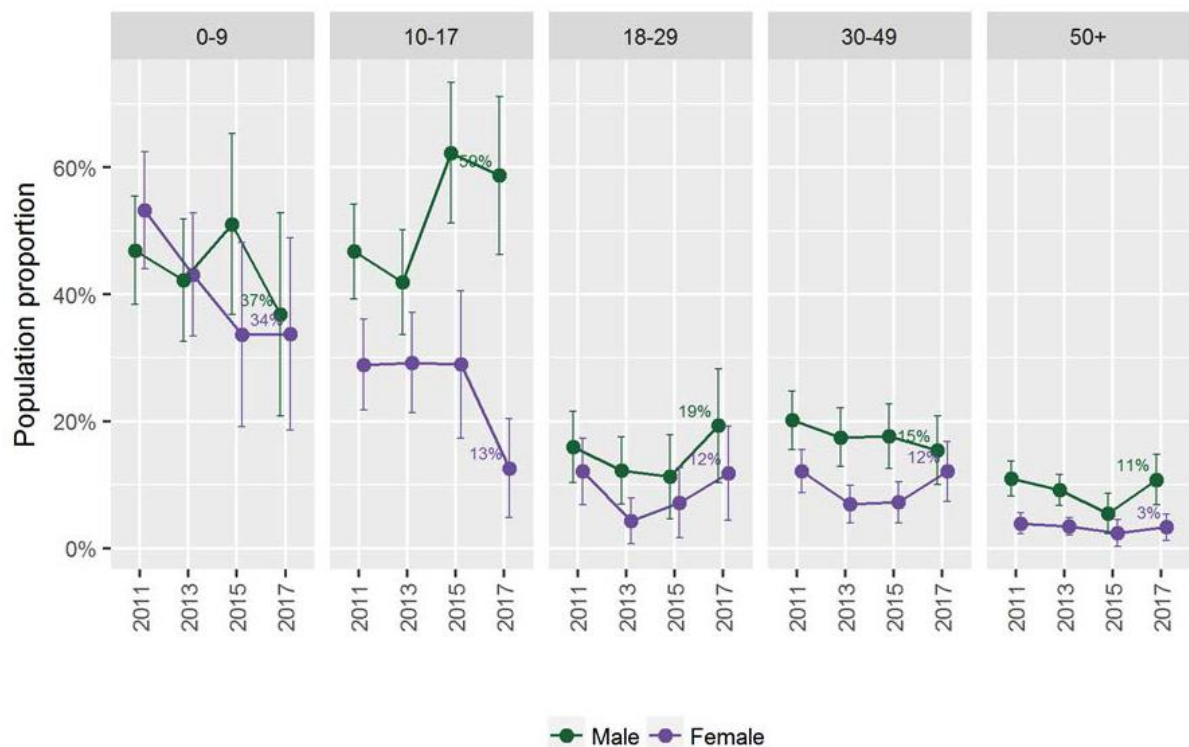


Figure 7: Cycling Participation Rates by Region (ABC, 2017)



All persons, cycling participation in past week

Figure 8: Cycling participation by age and gender in Victoria (ABC, 2017 p6)

Latent Demand

Despite this, research suggests there is large latent demand for cycling. Latent or induced demand occurs when the want or desire is one that a consumer is unable to satisfy, whether through a lack of information, money, skill or infrastructure. Some evidence suggests this applies to the level of cycling in Australia if results from the US are transferable. A study in Portland, Oregon, concluded nearly two thirds of the population would cycle more if they felt comfortable, safe, and cycling were easy and convenient (Geller, 2005). Geller (2005) identified four types of cyclists, ranging from the “strong and fearless”, the “enthused and confident”, the “interested but concerned,” and the “no way no how” (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Level of Interest in Cycling in the population (Geller, 2005 p39)

This conclusion is supported by the experience of Seville, Spain which introduced extensive cycling facilities which have led to an immediate boom in cycling (Walker, 2015) (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Cycling infrastructure in Seville

This suggests there exists an enormous potential to increase the number of cyclists if they felt confident and safe and infrastructure made it easy and convenient.

Health and Physical Activity

Low levels of physical activity are a major risk factor for ill health and mortality from all causes and contribute to excess weight and obesity leading to the diseases such as cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, some musculoskeletal conditions and some cancers. Being physically active improves mental and musculoskeletal health and reduces risk factors such as overweight and obesity, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol (AIHW, 2017).

Currently more than 1 in 2 people aged 18 and over (56%) do not meet physical activity guidelines with a higher proportion of women (58%) than men (53%) not meeting their physical activity guidelines (AIHW, 2017).

Physical inactivity increases with age (Figure 11). For those aged 18–24, 42% of men and 51% of women do not meet physical activity guidelines. For those aged 75 and over, 67% of men and 81% of women do not meet physical activity guidelines.

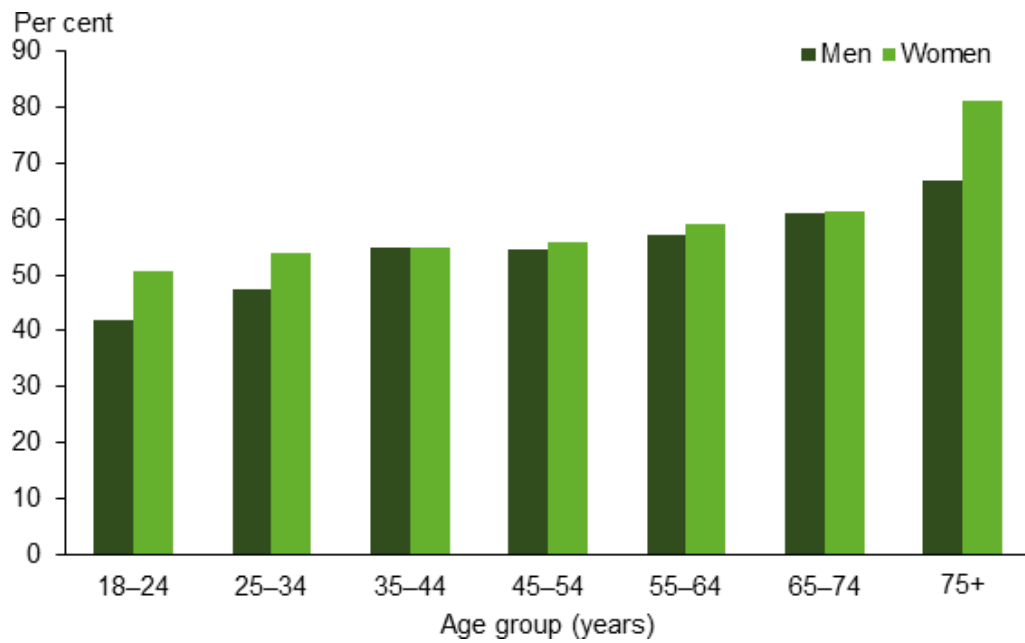


Figure 11: Physical Inactivity among Australians (AIHW, 2017)

Overall 9 out of 10 young Australians do not move enough (ABS, 2013). The Department of Health recommends children aged 5-18 should do 60 minutes of exercise everyday with more activity the better (DoH, 2014). Options for increasing physical activity generally focus on increasing the amount of walking and joining exercise groups or gyms (DoH, 2014). A much neglected option in Australia has been to increase physical activity through cycling (Holland, 2011).

Numerous studies have documented the many health benefits generated by cycling in terms of reduced risk for cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer, and type 2 diabetes, and consequently mortality (e.g. Börjesson and Eliasson, 2012, Deenihan and Caulfield, 2014, Sahlqvist et al., 2012).

Cycling is mainly an aerobic activity, which means that your heart, blood vessels and lungs all get a workout. People who cycle will breathe deeper, perspire and experience increased body temperature, which will improve your overall fitness level. The specific health benefits of regular cycling include:

- increased cardiovascular fitness
- increased muscle strength and flexibility
- improved joint mobility
- decreased stress levels
- improved posture and coordination
- strengthened bones

- decreased body fat levels
- prevention or management of disease
- reduced anxiety and depression (DHHS, 2017)

A meta- analysis of the extant literature on the health benefits of cycling was undertaken by both Oja et al. (2011) and the World Health Organization WHO (2014). Both studies found a strong inverse relationship between all-cause mortality and cycling as a form of physical activity.

Cycling has the potential to encourage moderate and vigorous intensity exercise, an option not available to walking. As the Australian Health Guidelines state, some physical activity each week should be moderate or vigorous in intensity. Vigorous intensity physical activity generally provides increased health benefits (AMA, 2014). However, the AMA emphasise that it is important to recognise that some of the largest gains in health and wellbeing are made by people who shift from being physical inactive (sedentary) to moderate amounts of physical activity as illustrated in Figure 12. This suggests sedentary people who take up bicycle riding for the first time are likely to derive the most benefit. These are the cyclists identified as “Interested but Concerned” and make up 60% of the population.

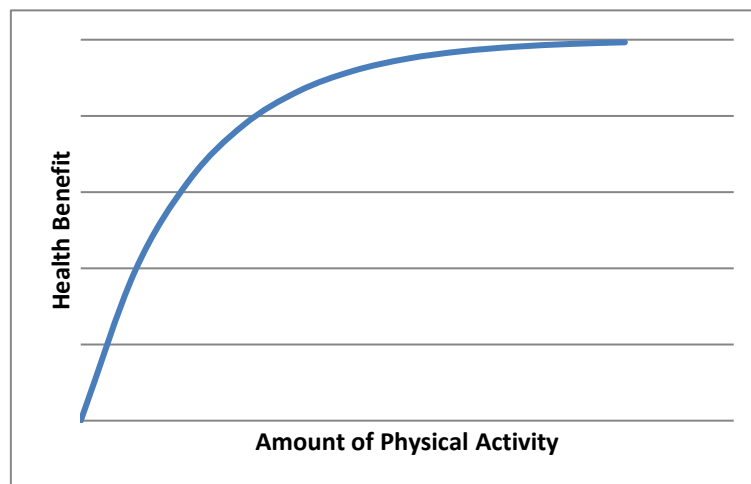


Figure 12: Marginal Benefit of Physical Activity (adapted from Wen et al., 2011 p1249)

Harnessing the potential of Cycling in the Western Suburbs

Recent research suggests one in three children are not learning to cycle due in part to parental fear about their safety (Crawford et al., 2015). Studies have found that those who do cycle are much more likely to meet the suggested amount of activity (Sahlqvist et al., 2012). An additional issue is the uneven gender split of the increase in cycling rates. Super Tuesday bicycle counts consistently show that women only represent approximately 20% of commuter cyclists (Bicycle Network, 2016).

The western suburbs of Melbourne is home to approximately 866,000 people (LeadWest, 2017) and this is projected to grow by 18% between 2013 and 2030. This will lead to an increase in demand for cycling amongst certain parts of the population but leave an increasing number of young people and women effectively excluded from cycling due to the lack of infrastructure and clubs.

The reasons for an increasing number of children and women not cycling are complex, but the levels of cycling among children and women will not increase unless women, children and their parents feel they are safe, and they have the skills to build their confidence. The only way this will change is through investment in infrastructure and education programs aimed at these groups.

Consequently, urgent action is needed to establish safe cycling infrastructure and programs that will support more people of all ages to get on their bikes and prevent tragedies like that witnessed in Yarraville in early 2017 where a young mother tragically lost her life, with the main issues being:

- the dearth of bicycle facilities and clubs in the western suburbs;
- the increasing popularity of cycling among some groups which is not translating into the younger generation or women taking up cycling;
- the latent demand for cycling suggested to be up to 60% of the population would cycle if it was safe and they felt confident;
- the lack of physical activity of people especially children and associated health costs, and
- the rapidly increasing population in the western suburbs

The Western Community Cycling Hub

A proposal to address these issues is the establishment of the Western Community Cycling Hub in Hansen Reserve West Footscray on the site of the former velodrome.

The Western Community Cycling Hub (WCCH) would be a multi-purpose venue that would cater for cyclists of all ages and ability levels and genders.

The WCCH would consist of several elements:

- a cycle track similar to the one at Packer Park, Carnegie (Figure 13) or Harrison St, Brunswick (Figure 14),
- an education area in the middle of the area similar to the Essendon Traffic School (Figure 15), and
- a conference centre for bicycle skills and maintenance courses similar to the Brunswick Velodrome Pavilion (Figure 16 and Figure 17)



Figure 13: Packer Park Velodrome, Carnegie



Figure 14: Brunswick Velodrome



Figure 15: Essendon Traffic School



Figure 16: Brunswick Velodrome Pavilion Exterior



Figure 17: Brunswick Velodrome Pavilion Interior

Local Government Strategies

The WCCH would fill a gap in the provision of facilities proposed by various council strategies including the Bicycle Strategy 2014, Open Space Strategy 2014 and Recreation Strategy 2009. All three strategies rate bicycle facilities as being important. The relevant strategy documents are listed below.

Maribyrnong Bike Strategy 2014

“4.11 Off Road cycle course

Council officers are presently considering whether there are any suitable sites in the municipality of an off-road course that would be suitable for bike related sports such as MTB, Cyclocross and BMX. Although cycle sports are not the main thrust of the bike strategy it seems that these sports could develop riding skills in a controlled environment. Quiet off-road paths provide ‘rider nurseries’ by providing the opportunity for inexperienced riders to practice their riding skills in a safe environment before embarking onto more challenging street and road networks. An off-road cycle course could fulfil a similar function for advanced riders” p50

Maribyrnong Recreation Strategy 2009

“Planning for, providing and maintaining shared trail infrastructure to provide for improved walking and cycling opportunities is recognised throughout a number of Council plans, resulting in various strategies and actions aimed at addressing infrastructure to encourage safe walking and bike riding.” p8

“The most popular activities like walking and cycling take place in the open space system. It is vital that this system provides a range of quality facilities and infrastructure that meets the long term needs of the community” p41

Maribyrnong Open Space Strategy 2014

“In line with Council objectives, the planning, provision, design and management of open space are underpinned by principles of sustainability. These include:

Promote cycling and walking to open space to encourage fitness and decrease private vehicle use”, Executive Summary p5

“Paths and trails

“Walking paths are the most frequently used facility in open space, with walking, dog walking and cycling being some of the most popular activities. There is potential to greatly improve opportunities for people to use open space by increasing the provision of paths into, around the space and connecting through it. An increase circuit in paths around existing reserves, improved connections into the existing linear trails and addressing gaps in the linear networks will all lead to increased activity in the parks contributing to safety and fitness.” p75

Cycling Network

The WCCH would be ideally located on the Roberts St bike lane that connects to the Federation Trail via Mclvor Reserve and via Robbs Rd cycle lanes and Princes Hwy service lanes to West Footscray Station. West Footscray Station provides a vital connection to the bicycle network north of the railway line to the Cross St Bike path and other bicycle lanes to Footscray (Figure 18).

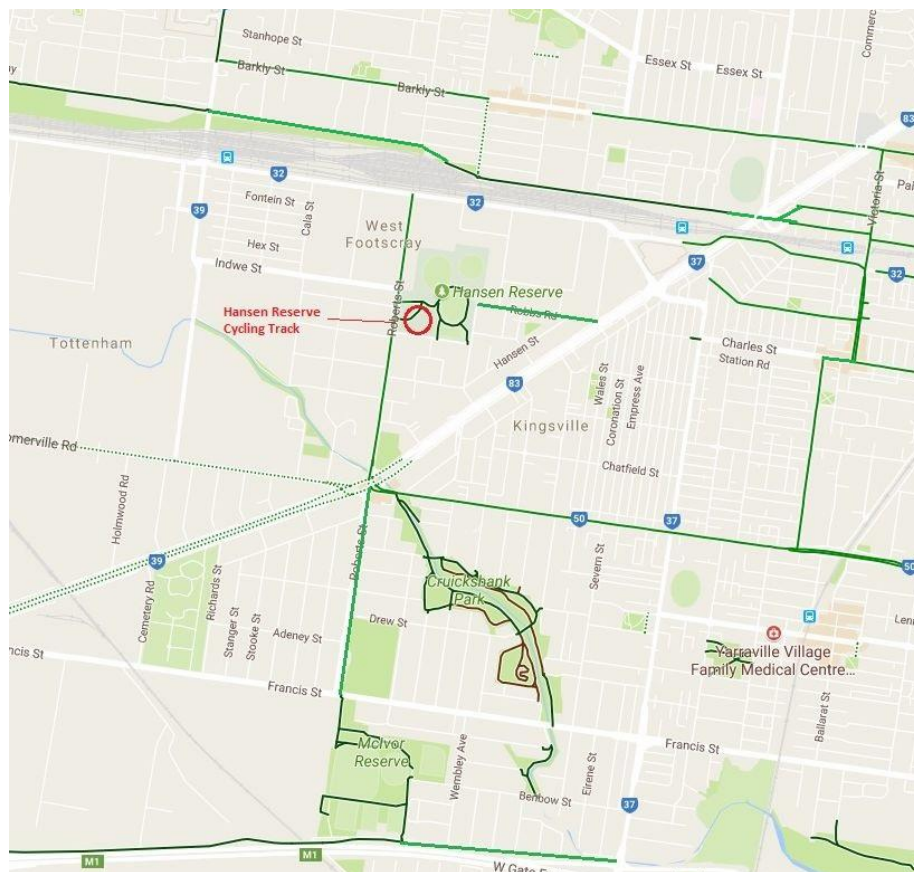


Figure 18: Hansen Reserve and local cycling network

Key Stakeholders

The WCCH would be a multipurpose venue with many stakeholders in addition to ratepayers in the Maribyrnong Local Government area. Due to the lack of bicycle facilities in the western suburbs, the WCCH would be the prime cycling infrastructure for the whole of the west of Melbourne. Key stakeholders for the WCCH would then include sporting groups, education providers and festival coordinators. Some of the key stakeholders are listed below.

Footscray Cycling Club

Footscray Cycling Club (FCC) is over 100 years old and was formed as a professional cycling club after the original Footscray Cycle Club became a social only institution. The Footscray Amateur Cycling Club was formed in the 1920s and both clubs raced at the Hansen Reserve Velodrome until its removal in the 1990s.

FCC is known as one of the pre-eminent road racing cycling clubs in Melbourne. They organise weekly road races in the Little River and Brisbane Ranges areas over winter and criterium races at Drake Boulevard in Altona and at the VU campus in Hoppers Crossing over summer. Currently FCC do not have a physical base to operate from and rely upon club members organising events and committee meetings at different venues.

FCC would benefit greatly from having a physical base to operate from and as a training centre. While track bicycles are different from road bicycles, the cycling track would provide a perfect training centre for cyclists of all abilities and disciplines for all of the western suburbs. As an example, John Beasley from Beasley Cycles in Footscray, currently trains the track sprint team from Malaysia, however, a cycling track in West Footscray would provide an ideal venue for high quality training.

Bicycle Education Providers

Bike Ed is a program developed by VicRoads. Bike Ed is delivered in schools and community settings and aims to help children aged 9 to 13 years develop the skills they need to ride safely and independently on roads and paths.

Bike Ed is delivered in schools and community settings. It is often delivered by teachers. However, municipalities, the police and community groups/volunteers can play a role in supporting the implementation of Bike Ed programs in schools.

Bike Ed inspires children to develop their bicycle riding skills and their physical capability. Other benefits include enhanced health, fitness and wellbeing, confidence and independence and learning and social development

Bike Ed aims to enable students to:

- gain knowledge and understanding of the road traffic environment and the road rules
- develop the physical and cognitive skills to manage the road traffic environment safely as a cyclist
- develop responsible behaviours, attitudes and decision-making skills for the safe use of bicycles both on and off the road through participation in enjoyable learning experiences relevant to their ages and abilities.

Together with a building for indoor learning activities and an off road cycling space both in the middle of the cycling track and on the track itself would provide an ideal venue for Bike Ed

Kingsville Kindergarten

Kingsville Kindergarten (KK) is located adjacent to Hansen Reserve and the WCCH would provide KK to provide Bike Ed courses on their doorstep. KK encourage development of the whole child through activity and play based curriculum that allows for independent choices and individual development. It would also provide more opportunities for physical activity that study after study suggests Australian children are not getting enough.

Primary and High Schools

Hansen Reserve is located centrally to numerous primary schools including, Kingsville, Yarraville West PS, Footscray West PS, Footscray North PS, Footscray City PS, Footscray PS, Corpus Christi PS, Wembley PS, Spotswood PS, Dinjerra PS, Newport Lakes PS, Newport Gardens PS, Altona North PS, St Johns PS, St Augustines PS and St Monicas PS. These are shown in Figure 19.

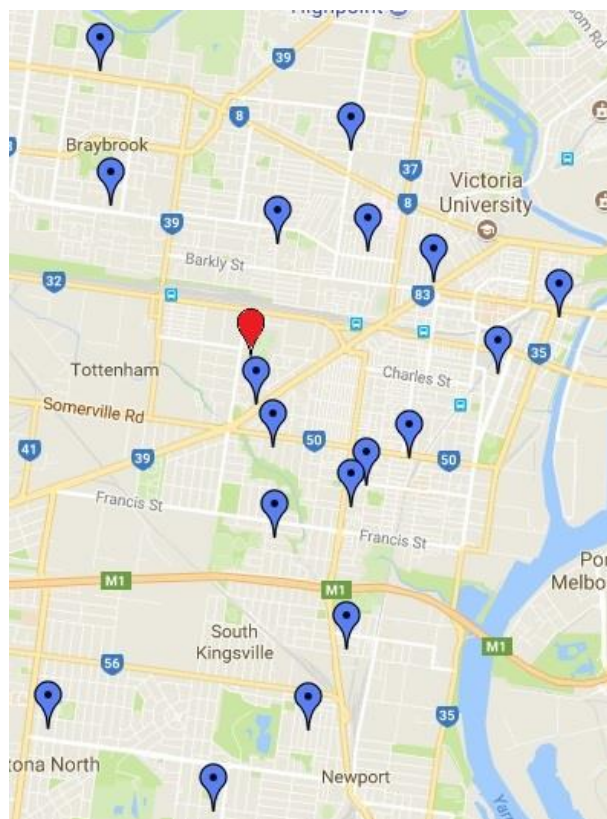


Figure 19: WCCH and Local Primary Schools

There are several local high schools which could also take advantage of the WCCH including, Braybrook College, Maribyrnong College, Footscray City College, Gilmore College, Bayside College and Williamstown High School. These are shown in Figure 20.

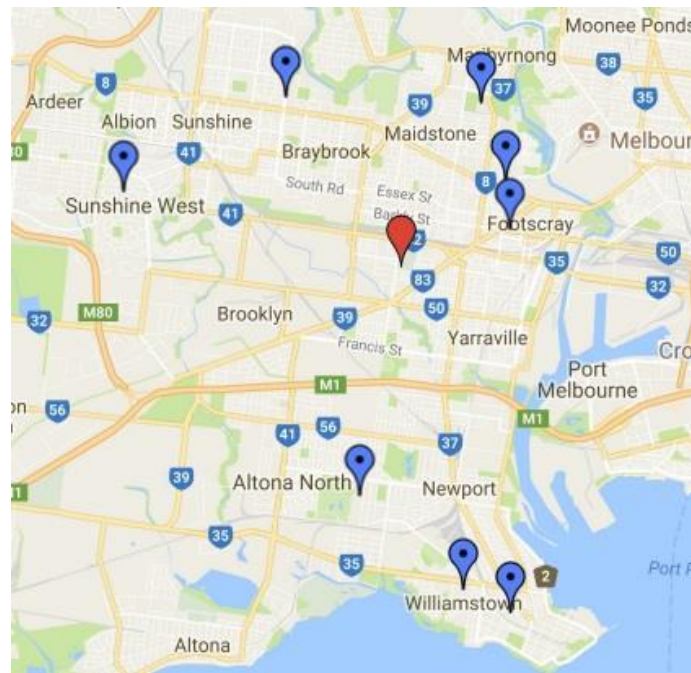


Figure 20: WCCH and Local High Schools

Primary schools and high schools could utilise the WCCH to run Bike Ed courses as well as incorporate the venue into their curriculum the way Dromana Secondary College has done with the mountain bike track located around the school. Mountain biking is now offered as a subject at Dromana Secondary College which includes cycling skills, maintenance skills, health and nutrition as well as business skills. Cycling Footscray City College are currently investigating establishing a similar MTB subject utilising the mountain bike tracks to be installed at Quarry Park. A cycling elective could also be incorporated into the health and physical education curriculum.

Victoria University

Victoria University would be a key stakeholder as the development of the WCCH would align closely with three of its major initiatives and research focuses: Sport, Health and Active Living Strategy, Footscray University Town and the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL).

Sport, Health and Active Living Strategy

Sport, Health and Active Living is a key flagship area for Victoria University. Over the course of 2016, Professor Greg Blatch and Professor Hans Westerbeek have been leading University-wide processes that have been focused on shaping and clarifying the vision and strategic directions for both sport and health at VU. The work has been focussed on exploring Sport and Health across the whole of VU and the community in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

Victoria University has identified the West of Melbourne has 93 sports facilities and 467 playing fields across the region, however, there is not one cycling facility. This represents both a significant gap and significant opportunity for Victoria University.

Footscray University Town

The Footscray University town initiative is a collaboration between Maribyrnong City Council and Victoria University to build on the strengths of the University and Footscray. The project aims to

create a vibrant, strong social and economic future for Footscray based around education, jobs, creativity, opportunity and success.

The concept of a university town is where university life is integrated within the local community. University people are an integral part of the community, lending their expertise and knowledge to support local enterprise and contributing to the local economy.

VU's research has found the following common characteristics we aim to achieve through the Footscray University Town initiative:

- a strong focus on sports, activity and creative arts
- prioritising walking, cycling and transit connections
- a high quality public environment
- a boost to local jobs, the local economy and income levels
- a culture of incubating businesses and fostering innovation, encouraging entrepreneurs to start up and stay.

A Community Cycling Hub closely aligns with these characteristics and would be a key enabler of the Footscray University Town concept.

Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL)

ISEAL research covers a range from human development to high performance sport and makes significant contributions to exercise science globally beyond the traditional sporting settings. ISEAL is a leading research institute in terms of understanding the relationships between exercise, physical activity, and chronic disease prevention, including the mechanisms by which exercise can prevent, reduce or reverse disease progression.

ISEAL also researches how to promote and engage individuals and communities in more active lifestyles. Their main research focus in this field is on the psycho-social and environmental factors which might explain health behaviour change and in particular community participation in sport, exercise and physical activity. As a research facility they aim to make significant impacts on the whole life cycle from children's physical health through to the elderly.

A community cycling hub would be an ideal research venue for ISEAL and facilitate their community participation and make impacts on health and wellbeing.

Women's Cycling Groups e.g. Wheel Women

In Australia, women are vastly underrepresented in terms of cycling. This issue is being addressed by groups such as Wheel Women.

Wheel Women provide programs and rides that allow women to motivate and challenge themselves, while supporting others along the way. With guidance from accredited coaches, Wheel Women creates a judgment-free learning environment to build confidence and achieve goals. Currently Wheel Women are based in Flemington and provide all of their classes on public roads. Wheel Women have expressed great support for the concept of the WCCH and consider it would be an ideal off road bike education facility. The support of Wheel Women is vital due to the underrepresentation of women in cycling.

Phoenix Youth Hub

Phoenix Youth Hub is home to Maribyrnong Youth Services. The PYH is an inclusive organisation that welcomes all young people inclusive of race, disability, gender, age, culture, religion, sexuality or family structure. It is a place where young people can hang out, get involved in fun activities, run their own events, and access support services should they need it.

PYH organises programs and events at their premises in Buckley St Footscray or at outreach locations such as RecWest, Braybrook Community Hub and local schools. All programs and services are for young people aged 12 to 25, who live, work, study or play in the City of Maribyrnong. The WCCH would provide another ideal outreach location for young people to learn to cycle and/or learn bicycle maintenance skills.

Cycle Saloon

Cycle Saloon incorporated is a not-for-profit, shared, bicycle recycling workshop located in Pipemaker's Park on the Maribyrnong River. They provide public access to quality bike tools for anyone to use to repair their own bicycle(s). Their aim is to repair bikes that are otherwise destined for the scrap heap and to put them back into use. It is also our aim to encourage others to learn about bicycle repairs and maintenance to increase the longevity, safety and usefulness of their bike. Glenn Mason runs Cycle Saloon and is a qualified engineer as well as currently undertaking a Master of Teaching. Currently Cycle Saloon operates out of a small shed and they do not have permanent dwellings. One possibility would be the relocation of Cycle Saloon to the WCCH and engaging them for cycle maintenance courses for the public and schools.

Western Suburbs Triathlon Club

The Western Suburbs Triathlon Club was formed in 1983 to provide a supportive structure for athletes on the Western side of Melbourne and has clubrooms on the Altona Foreshore. The club has been one of (if not 'the') biggest clubs in Victoria for many years. Since 1983 the club has held in excess of 300 races on the Altona foreshore area which provides one of the fastest and safest race venues anywhere.

Currently the WSTC offer stationary bike (turbo trainers) training sessions at their clubrooms twice a week. However, stationary bike training is limited in its appeal. WSTC members could utilise the WCCH for training and also take advantage of the Yarraville Swim Centre located beside Hansen Reserve for multi sport sessions. In addition, if a running track was installed around the perimeter of Hansen Reserve, then it could become a premier triathlon training venue.

Yarraville Swim Centre

An increased amount of triathletes visiting the WCCH is likely to be of benefit to the Yarraville Swim Centre as they may take advantage of "Brick" training, i.e. multi-sport sessions.

Yarraville Club Cricket Club

The Yarraville Club Cricket Club is a successful club formed in the early 1970s. They make use of the ovals at Hansen Reserve in the summer and utilise the pavilion there. They share the pavilion with North Footscray Football Club and previously with the Footscray Cycling Club and Footscray Amateur Cycling Club. The WCCH would have little impact on the YCCC as it is proposed new buildings be established so the club would not have to share the pavilion.

North Footscray Football Club

The North Footscray Football Club is also based at Hansen Reserve and was formed in the early 1930s. They play on the ovals during winter and the WCCH would also have little impact on them due to the proposed new buildings.

Multipurpose Venue

In addition to being an education centre, locating the WCCH at Hansen Reserve also encourages the opportunity to develop the site as a multisport hub such as triathlon and cyclocross. The WCCH could also be an additional festival venue and complement the Maribyrnong City Council's branding of itself at the "Festival City". The smooth surface and controlled environment would also provide an excellent venue for a metropolitan version of the RACV Energy Breakthrough Challenge.

Cycling Training and Racing Venue

The site of the former velodrome is the ideal location for an updated cycling track as shown in Figure 21



Figure 21: Cycling track at Hansen Reserve

Triathlon Training Venue

The Yarraville Swim Centre that houses a 25m pool in a converted factory is located at Hansen Reserve and if a running track was installed around the 1.4km perimeter of the reserve similar to the well known, "Tan" track around the Botanic Gardens, this would make Hansen Reserve an ideal triathlon training venue. A representation of this is shown in Figure 22. The running track could also be used for joggers from the broader community as well as the football and cricket clubs.

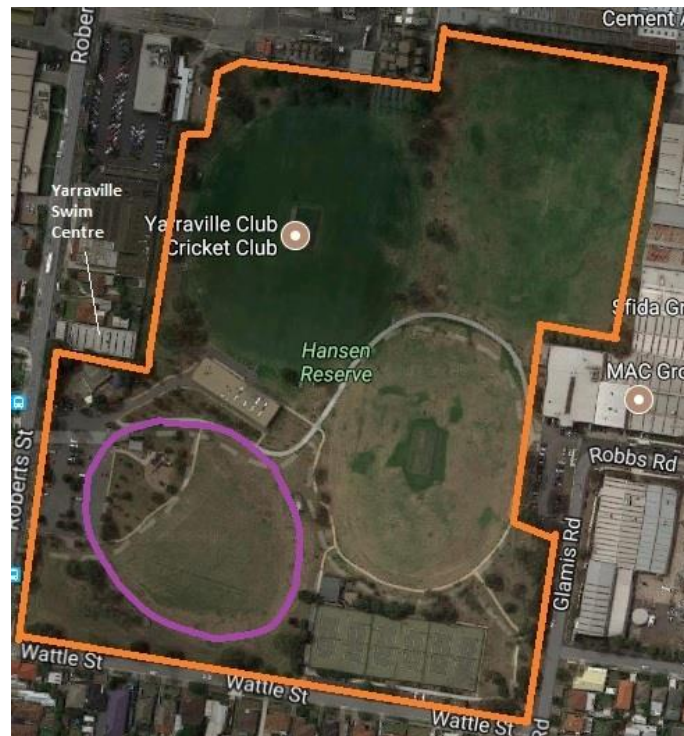


Figure 22: Proposed Running Track and location of Yarraville Swim Centre

Cyclocross Venue

Cyclocross (CX) is a form of bicycle racing. Races are usually held in autumn and winter and consist of numerous laps of a short (1-3 km) circuit featuring several of the following features: pavement, wooded trails, grass, steep hills and obstacles requiring the rider to quickly dismount, carry the bike while navigating the obstruction and remount. Races are commonly between 30 minutes and an hour long.

Cyclocross has several features in common with mountain bike racing, cross-country cycling and road criterium racing (races around a short road circuit 1-2km in length). As such it is a popular cross over for road cyclists and mountain bike riders of all ages and genders. The National Cyclocross Series has previously held races in the City of Maribyrnong at Cranwell Park in Braybrook in 2014 and 2015. The WCCH could provide a permanent venue for cyclocross racing and consistently be part of the National Cyclocross Series. Cyclocross races are also held at the Brunswick Velodrome where they race on the inner section of the track as well as part of the course leaving the velodrome and racing along Merri Creek (Figure 23).



Figure 23: Cyclocross racing at Brunswick Velodrome

Festival Venue

The Coburg Velodrome has recently become the site of successful festival events such as a Food Truck Festival, Dumpling Festival, Moonlight Cinema and Concert venue (Figure 24). The WCCH would provide an excellent venue for such events in the western suburbs. Chris Mitchell from Velodrome Events who run the Food Truck Festival at Coburg Velodrome has recently visited Hansen Reserve and expressed his support for the proposal.



Figure 24: Coburg Velodrome Outdoor Cinema and Festival

RACV Energy Breakthrough Challenge Venue

The RACV Energy Breakthrough is a joint initiative of the Country Education Project (CEP), Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC), and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV).

The RACV Energy Breakthrough provides opportunities for students, teachers, parents and local industry to work together to design and construct a vehicle, a machine or innovation in technology that will represent an 'energy breakthrough. The RACV Energy Breakthrough is not just a once-a-year event as school groups work throughout the year to design, build and test vehicles or machines within detailed specifications. It requires a team effort and an across-the-curriculum approach.

These groups then bring their vehicles and machines to Maryborough in the Central Goldfields Shire, Victoria to demonstrate and trial them in action (Figure 25).

The categories include innovations in Technology, pushcarts, Human Powered Vehicles, Try-athlon and Energy Efficient Vehicles.

Very few schools in the western suburbs enter this competition despite its obvious appeal. One factor inhibiting entries is the lack of a training venue to test their vehicles that could be catered for by the WCCH and the Head of Technology at Footscray City College is investigating entering a team if a practice venue became available.



Figure 25: RACV Energy Breakthrough Challenge

The recently announced Footscray Learning Precinct (FLP) includes the intention to build a Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre on Ballarat Rd Footscray, as part of Footscray City College (Figure 26). The WCCH would be an ideal venue for students to test and experiment other STEM activities in addition to the RACV Challenge such as solar powered cars, remote control robotics, and exercise science like the STEM Institute of Sport program at Rooty Hill High School in NSW.

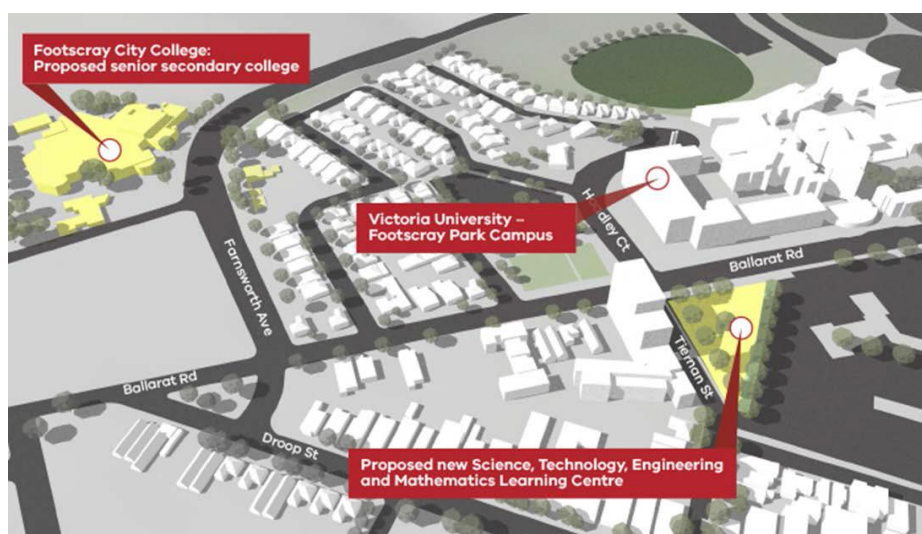


Figure 26: Proposed new Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Centre

Conclusion

The vision of a Western Community Cycling Hub in Hansen Reserve West Footscray for all ages and abilities is a compelling one. A community-cycling hub would fit with several Maribyrnong Council's strategic plans as well as fill a large gap in community infrastructure in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Infrastructure of this type would be even more successful if it was complemented by social infrastructure in the form of a cycling club for young people and education courses for riding skills and bicycle maintenance as well as provide another festival venue to capitalise on Maribyrnong's reputation in this area.

The benefits of the WCCH would include increased engagement, physical activity (better health) and skill development for people of all ages. Such projects help build community and foster social inclusion as well as encourage the 60% of people to cycle who are interested but concerned.

The redevelopment of Hansen Reserve provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to increase engagement and activity of Maribyrnong residents in a fun and exciting way which would benefit everyone. Such a venue, incorporating a velodrome and bicycle education facilities in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne would provide an ongoing physical base and cycling hub for the broader region and many stakeholders. A community cycling hub would provide ongoing benefits to the cycling and broader community of the Western Suburbs and beyond for decades to come. Such a facility would benefit a large section of our local community and provide for family, club, and school based opportunities, as well as skill development, general health benefits and social inclusion.

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Supporters

The following organisation have expressed in Principle Support for the development of the Western Community Cycling Hub



Seddon **Community Bank**[®]
Branch







Grant Thornton

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SWEENEY





Dr John Symons

17 July 2017

Research Fellow

Victoria Institute of Strategic Economic Studies (VISES) Victoria 300 Flinders St,
Melbourne Victoria Australia 3000

Re: Letter of Support for Western Community Cycling Hub

Dear Dr Symons

Bicycle Network is pleased to confirm its endorsement and in-principle support for the Western Community Cycling Hub.

We are delighted that this concept has been developed at the local level to revive historic community facilities and thereby encourage greater levels of healthy physical activity in Maribyrnong.

Given Bicycle Network's role in promoting and advocating for active transport, with a focus on bike riding, the outcomes of this project with greater cycling participation in a rapidly growing suburb will be of major significance. Bicycle Network will commit to

- < continue to work with roads authorities, the TAC and local government to extend and improve the safe cycling network in the West.
- < offer the Ride2School program across the district to engage youth and families in healthy travel habits.
- < continue to work to normalise cycling as an everyday activity and commuting and recreational option in the West.
- < promote and support activities of the Western Community Cycling Hub

We look forward to working with you and the other partners to this proposal working towards healthier and more connected community.

Yours sincerely,

Garry Brennan Senior Policy Advisor
Bicycle Network

More people cycling more often

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To Whom It May Concern,

Re - Hansen Reserve

On behalf of Cycling Victoria, we will like to support the Western Community Cycling Hub Submission in redeveloping the cycling track at Hansen Reserve in West Footscray.

Footscray Cycling Club proposal aligns with Cycling Victoria's strategic plan vision to build a love of cycling with more people riding, racing and watching.

The Clubs proposal will create a safer place to ride and increase the number of cyclist in the West Footscray area by enabling the club to engage junior participants who are often prevented from taking up the sport due to parental safety concerns surrounding the on road environment.

We look forward to working with the Footscray Cycling Club and the City of Maribymong to grow an active Maribymong

Sincerely,

Paul Jane
CEO Cycling Victoria