



Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

**CENTRAL SPRINGS RESERVE
MASTER PLAN**

October 2021

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Version: Final
Date: 11 October 2021

This report is designed to be printed double sided with A3 inserts.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vii
E1 CONTEXT	vii
E2 EXISTING CONDITIONS	vii
E3 PROPOSED CHANGES	vii
E4 CONSULTATION	viii
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.2 PURPOSE	1
1.3 METHOD	2
1.4 PROJECT MANAGEMENT	2
SECTION 2: VALUES & SIGNIFICANCE	3
2.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS	3
2.2 NATURAL VALUES	9
2.3 CULTURAL VALUES	11
2.4 USE VALUES	13
2.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF CENTRAL SPRINGS RESERVE	16
SECTION 3: PLANNING CONTEXT	17
3.1 TRADITIONAL OWNERS	17
3.2 LAND STATUS & ZONING	17
3.3 EXISTING STRATEGIES & PLANS	17
3.4 STAKEHOLDERS	21
SECTION 4: VISION & STRATEGIC GOALS	23
4.1 VISION STATEMENT	23
4.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	23
SECTION 5: THE CONCEPT PLAN	27
5.1 NEW ACCESS PATHS	38
5.2 SHELTER STRUCTURES	39
5.3 PAVING AND WALLING	39
5.4 FURNITURE	40
5.5 WAYFINDING SIGNAGE	40
5.6 INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE	40
5.7 MINERAL SPRINGS SIGNAGE	40
5.8 LIGHTING	40
5.9 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	40
5.10 FURTHER AREAS OF INVESTIGATION	41
5.11 IMPLEMENTATION	41
APPENDIX 1: PLANNING MAPS	49
APPENDIX 2: CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT	55
APPENDIX 3: LOCAL WALKING TRACKS	57



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E1 CONTEXT

The Central Springs Reserve is an open space reserve to the south of Lake Daylesford significant for its mineral springs and links to bush trails. The Crown land reserve is located on Dja Dja Wurrung country.

Hepburn Shire Council (HSC) engaged Sentient Design in February 2021 to develop an updated Master Plan for the Reserve that reflects the current aspirations of the community and significant stakeholders.

The purpose of this document is to detail a plan for the short-medium term development and management of the open space by the Shire and other stakeholders

E2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The flat valley floor of the reserve is characterised by mature deciduous trees planted next to the Wombat Creek. The surrounding hill slopes rise steeply and are well covered with semi-mature indigenous trees, creating a sharp visual contrast reflective of the post-European influence on the landscape managed by the Traditional Owners.

Several features exist in the reserve including the three Central Springs, the Hard Hills Spring and the pumping infrastructure that once harnessed hydroelectric power.

Access into the site from Fulcher Street and Lake Daylesford is steep and poorly surfaced. Existing stairs are non DDA compliant and, at some points, hazardous. The reserve itself is dilapidated and in need of an upgrade to paths and furniture.

The replacement of a recently demolished shelter (on the opposite bank) is strongly supported by the local community, along with other aesthetic and access improvements.

E3 PROPOSED CHANGES

This Master Plan proposes the development of the reserve as *“a well-presented and accessible passive reserve that presents cultural stories in a shaded setting with links to the surrounding bushland.”*. Strategic objectives have been identified for improvements in the areas of presentation & amenity, accessibility, , culture & history, connectivity & wayfinding, biodiversity, indigenous vegetation, exotic vegetation.

The proposed improvements include:

- New landscaping to the reserve generally including an Indigenous designed shelter structure, amenity area, paths, furniture and signage.
- New setting for the Central Springs including new accessible pumps, paving, furniture and stone wall
- Interpretation and presentation of the existing historic features
- Edge stabilisation and planting treatments to the Wombat Creek
- A new DDA car park off Fulcher Street with accessible path to the reserve
- New paths from the reserve to both the main car park and to Lake Daylesford to allow a higher degree of safety and access.
- Formalisation and renewal of the existing main car park
- New wayfinding and interpretation signage throughout.

The projected time frame for implementation is six years, and the estimated construction cost of \$1.076 million.

E4 CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation has been conducted in the development of this Master Plan.

An internal Project Working Group was created to guide the project and ensure that it is in line with HSC policy and operations. This group met at four points through the project period.

The Draft Master Plan was presented to Hepburn Shire Councillors and also made available to the public throughout a three week consultation period. Meetings were held with representatives from DELWP, the Dja Dja Wurrung, the Friends of Lake Daylesford and Rotary.

A complete list of consultation activities is included as an Appendix.



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Central Springs Reserve forms part of the wider Lake Daylesford precinct and is located just beyond the outflow of the lake at the south-western corner. The three bores within the reserve are one component of the largest concentration of natural mineral springs in Australia. Lake Daylesford is an engineered lake located within central Daylesford and a significant focus for tourism and passive recreation in the town.

Located in Jaara country of the Dja Dja Wurrung, the area became further populated during the 1850's gold rush. Daylesford and the district became well known for the healing powers of the mineral waters, and the recent history of the town has been shaped largely by these two influences.

A Master Plan for the Reserve was prepared by Land Design Partnership in 2012 following the June 2010 Master Plan Review by the Victorian Mineral Water Advisory Committee (VMWAC). This review was updated in 2015 and provides high level guidance to future plans and implementation and management of the Reserve and Springs.

Hepburn Shire Council (HSC) engaged Sentient Design in February 2021 to develop an updated Master Plan for the Reserve that reflects the current aspirations of the community and significant stakeholders.

1.2 PURPOSE

The project brief states that *"Council has committed to delivering an updated Master Plan with a focus on user group and broader community consultation informing the updated plan."*¹

The purpose of this document is to detail a plan for the short-medium term development and management of the open space by the Shire and other stakeholders. The plan proposes an amended layout for Reserve as well as new access walkways to provide improved accessibility to the site. The plan also proposes a suite of materials and locations for new furniture to improve the appearance of the reserve and align it to the Lake Daylesford context. It also nominates locations for wayfinding and interpretive signage.

The plan is designed to aid implementation by the identification and specification of individual projects and works packages. The plan includes a table of proposed actions with a relative priority and indicative costs.

2 CENTRAL SPRINGS RESERVE MASTER PLAN

1.3 METHOD

The project commenced with an analysis of the physical form, character and condition of the site. This was guided by a Feature and Level Survey and the identification of the species, size and health of all tree species across the project site.

An initial Project Working Group (PWG) meeting was conducted with HSC officers with interests in reserve presentation, biodiversity, access and inclusion and reconciliation.

Relevant strategies, plans and policies from both the Shire and State Government were reviewed for potential guidance and constraints.

A Preliminary Master Plan was presented to the PWG as well as representatives of the Friends of Lake Daylesford, Rotary and the Dja Dja Wurrung. Feedback was consolidated into this Draft Master Plan.

1.4 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The project is being managed by the Major Projects team of HSC.



Map 1: Aerial view showing the project area

SECTION 2: VALUES & SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT & CIRCULATION

The extent of the Reserve under consideration within this Master Plan is bound by the Wombat Creek, Fulcher Street, the dam wall of Lake Daylesford and the main car park off Fulcher Street.

The creek runs down from the dam wall along the south-eastern side of the relatively flat valley floor. The hill slopes rise steeply either side, although the north-western slope has previously had significant physical modification to build paths and allow for buildings.

The three mineral springs that the Reserve is named for are arranged near the creek in a brick paved area bound by a stone retaining wall in disrepair. The Hard Hills spring (currently closed) is found further south under the canopy of some large mature deciduous trees. Pedestrian movement in this area is dispersed with some evidence of compaction over the tree root zones.

A small shed sits at the foot of the dam wall with pumps that were used in a hydroelectric scheme. This area is currently partially under water.



Photograph 1: Central Springs Mineral Spring C



Photograph 2: Looking down into the Hard Hills Spring

Three lights on poles with overhead cables between provide a network of lighting to the space. This lighting is visually bulky and the overhead cables are unattractive. The age of the luminaires implies less efficient lighting technology.

The Reserve is currently in a fairly dilapidated condition. Paths have unclear edges and are damaged by stormwater and resulting erosion.

CONNECTIONS

A steep asphalt path runs between Lake Daylesford and the springs area, though there is little visual connection between the two spaces. To the south further springs can be reached along a gravel path adjacent to the Wombat Creek.



Photograph 3: Existing non-DDA compliant stairs to the east of the Central Springs

Two sets of stairs enable people to move between the Reserve and Fulcher Street (and the car park). The stairs and sloping paths are non-DDA compliant and in an unsafe condition in places.

FURNITURE, SURFACE FINISHES & MATERIALS

Furniture is not well located and is generally very poor condition. A number of different styles and materials are present, evidence of an ad hoc supply over previous decades. The recently installed timber sleeper palisade wall against the bottom of the hill slope is quite incongruous.

The valley floor is mostly grassed, with gravel installed under the dense shade of the deciduous trees. Paths are a mix of gravel, asphalt and brick paving. Sandstone has been used in a few applications, notably around the Central Springs and as retaining walls. While the material is appropriate the quality of construction and current condition is poor.

The hill slopes are generally surfaced in natural leaf litter of varied depths.

Plan 1 (opposite): Existing Conditions - Main Reserve

Plan 2 (overleaf): Existing Conditions - Car Park

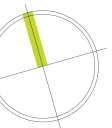
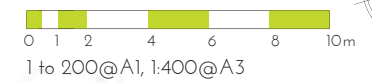


LEGEND

- Existing grass
- Existing gravel
- Existing asphalt
- Existing granitic sand
- Existing stone element
- Existing handrail
- Existing vegetated slope
- Existing low planting
- Existing brick paving
- Existing park light & overhead line
- Exotic/native tree canopy extent

KEY FEATURES

- 1 Central Springs mineral water pumps
- 2 Steep asphalt path to Lake Daylesford
- 3 Stairs to Fulcher Street
- 4 Hard Hills Spring set in granitic sand paving
- 5 Wombat Creek
- 6 Gravel path to main car park
- 7 Gravel path to Fulcher Street
- 8 Footprint of former dance hall
- 9 Pump Shed with pump infrastructure
- 10 Shaded area with deciduous trees



Client:
Hepburn Shire Council

Project:
Central Springs Reserve

Drawing Title & Version:
Existing Conditions - Main Reserve

Date:
1 June 2021

Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL

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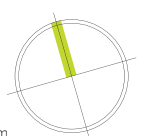
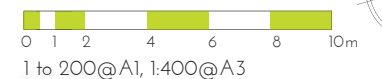


KEY FEATURES

- 1 Main car park with asphalt surface
- 2 Car park entrance from Fulcher Street
- 3 Current grassed pedestrian path from car park to Central Springs Reserve
- 4 Retaining walls to car park
- 5 Gravel path to Central Springs Reserve
- 6 Decommissioned path down embankment to Central Springs Reserve

LEGEND

- Existing grass
- Existing gravel
- Existing asphalt
- Existing begetated slope
- Existing stone element
- Native tree canopy extent



Client:
Hepburn Shire Council

Project:
Central Springs Reserve

Drawing Title & Version:
Existing Conditions - Car Park

Date:
1 June 2021



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EXISTING VEGETATION

The dominant vegetative feature of the valley floor is the cluster of large deciduous trees. These exotic tree species include mature individuals of *Quercus robur* English Oak and *Fraxinus excelsior* and recently planted *Quercus coccinea* Scarlet Oak. The mown grass and grasses along the dam wall are also introduced species. A mature *Salix fragilis* Basket Willow provides shade, but is a weed of concern adjacent to waterways.

Most of the surveyed trees between the Reserve and Fulcher Street are indigenous species that have grown naturally on the disturbed slope. The species present include *Eucalyptus rubida* Candlebark, *Eucalyptus radiata* Narrow-leaf Peppermint, *Acacia melanoxylon* Blackwood and *Acacia dealbata* Silver Wattle.

There is some evidence of natural regeneration of indigenous species occurring, while other areas are dominated by woody weeds or exotic grasses. There are environmental weeds present in the riparian zone.

2.2 NATURAL VALUES

GEOLOGY & UNDERLYING HYDROLOGY

The underlying geology of the Central Springs site is Lower Ordovician marine derived sandstones. This region is part of the Castlemaine Supergroup.¹ Materials include sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.

The ordovician sedimentary bedrock aquifer comprises both shallow local flow systems and deeper systems that include those that host carbonated mineral water with flow paths extending up to 40km.

The ground water extracted in the springs in its natural state contains "*carbon dioxide and other soluble matter in sufficient concentration to cause effervescence or impart a distinctive taste*".²



Photograph 4: Looking upstream along the Creek from the stand of deciduous trees

- 1 Source: Geological Survey of Victoria, Department of Manufacturing and Industry Development 1992
- 2 Central Victorian Mineral Springs GMA Local Management Plan, Goulburn-Murray Water 2013

SURFACE HYDROLOGY

The Central Springs Reserve is located along the Wombat Creek. Prior to the construction of Lake Daylesford this waterway would have provided a potentially ephemeral water source, and would have been a significant movement corridor and habitat for many animal species.

Since the construction of the dam wall retaining Lake Daylesford, a consistent minimum flow is provided to Wombat Creek. After heavy rain a higher volume of water is released from the lake, and the base of the Reserve has been known to flood.

Water flowing from Lake Daylesford passes through the Cascades, a picturesque natural rock feature.



Photograph 5: The Cascades feature with built stone retaining wall behind.

This supply of water allows for the presence of a variety of riparian plants species which contributes to the biodiversity potential of the area. The reliable supply and generally consistent level would allow for relatively easy revegetation activities.

VEGETATION

The Central Springs site is located within the Central Victorian Uplands bioregion. The Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) is considered to be Valley Grassy Forest (47), although the varied topography of the valley may allow for micro-climates that support additional indigenous species. This EVC has a State Conservation status of 'Vulnerable'.

The mature exotic deciduous trees are prized by the local community and visitors for their shade and coolness in summer and contribution to the Daylesford autumn display. Some additional exotic trees have been planted recently in open areas of the valley floor.

An assessment has been undertaken of all existing trees within the reserve including species, health and structure. A species survey has not been carried out to identify existing understory plants.

FAUNA

There is no recent survey evidence of the presence of particular faunal species to consider for this specific site. The fact that the site is contiguous with surrounding forest areas would suggest that a variety of native birds, reptiles and mammals may be present.

Given the adjacent housing it is certain that cats are present within the gully, along with other introduced species.

2.3 CULTURAL VALUES

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

*"Prior to European colonisation, all natural places within Dja Dja Wurrung country were well known, had a name and song and were celebrated as a part of country and culture."*³

The Dja Dja Wurrung People are the Traditional Owner Group for this country, a position formalised in the Recognition Statement and Settlement Agreement developed between the State Government of Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. This agreement "binds the State of Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung People to a meaningful partnership founded on mutual respect."⁴

While the physical landscape has been heavily modified by more recent settlement and mining activities, as a source of reliable water, the valley would once have been a cultural place for the Dja Dja Wurrung people connected to their traditions and spiritual ancestors.

COLONIAL HERITAGE

When the Daylesford area was opened to pastoralists, the area was known as 'Wombat Run'. In 1851 gold was discovered in the bed of Wombat Creek under what is now Lake Daylesford. Within 10 years the influx of miners had largely displaced the Indigenous population and exhausted the alluvial gold reserves.

A secondary timber harvesting industry developed to provide timber for construction and fuel, leading to the de-forestation of many surrounding areas.

The extraction and bottling of mineral water began at Hepburn Springs in 1884 and the area became known for the health-giving properties of the water.

3 Source: <http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au>, Recognition & Settlement Agreement 28 March 2013, Accessed May 2021

4 Source: <http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au>, Recognition & Settlement Agreement 28 March 2013, Accessed May 2021

The lake was created in the 1920s by constructing the dam wall at the east of the Central Springs Reserve, thus providing the centrepiece of Daylesford as a recreation destination.

Many historic photographs exist of the Reserve showing the characteristic broad paths and clear understory. The former location of a large timber building and rotunda can be estimated based upon the location of existing elements. Ornamentation was simple with painted timber fences and furniture.



Photograph 6: The official opening of Lake Daylesford in 1929

Source: Thelma Studios ca. 1930, State Library of Victoria

RECENT HISTORY

The band stand structure to the south-west of Wombat Creek was severely damaged by a falling tree in 2018, and subsequently demolished. There has been a clear desire within the local community to provide a replacement structure, although there is not a clear preference for the location for this.

The rest of the Reserve, while fairly well-maintained, requires renewal. Significant rain events cause gravel to move across footpaths and erode the surfacing. The furniture is largely in disrepair and the location of signage is ad hoc.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The character of the Reserve is shaped by the striking visual contrast between the exotic trees of the relatively flat valley floor and the enclosing hill slopes and their canopy of indigenous trees.

It is a visual metaphor referencing the abrupt and long lasting effect of colonisation on the existing Traditional Owner population and the indigenous vegetation. The dam wall itself is also a signifier of the environmental change wrought by large scale engineering works on the flora and fauna of the valley.



Photograph 7: The Lake Daylesford boathouse with a background of both exotic and native vegetation. Source Pixabay under Creative Commons Licence

The planting of exotic tree stock was done to 'beautify' the Australian landscape, and to mitigate the extreme heat. The combination of large deciduous trees enclosed within patches of remnant *Eucalypt* dominated sclerophyll forest is strongly characteristic of the central Victorian townships that developed during the gold rush.

2.4 USE VALUES

SOCIAL

27% of respondents to a community survey conducted by HSC utilise the Reserve for socialising with family or friends. There was strong support for improvements to presentation, a shelter and park furniture.

It is likely that current use of the Reserve for social events is limited by the lack of suitable infrastructure.

RECREATION

95% of survey respondents visited the reserve to exercise and over 50% arriving by either walking, running or riding. In addition over 50% of respondents identified the physical link that the Reserve provides to the bush trails. A map of local connecting walking trails is included as an Appendix.



Photograph 8: Group gathering at the mineral springs with kiosk and dance hall behind
Source: Victorian Railways ca. 1945 - 1954, State Library of Victoria



Photograph 9: View from the southern bank towards the dance hall and rotunda
Source: Postcard ca. 1920-1954 Rose Stereograph Co., State Library of Victoria collection



Photograph 10: Looking upstream along the Creek with the springs in the foreground
Source: Victorian Railways ca. 1945 - 1954, State Library of Victoria



Photograph 11: Hard Hills Spring with the rotunda behind

Source: Postcard ca. 1938 Rose Stereograph Co., State Library of Victoria collection



Photograph 12: Hard Hills Spring showing the demolished bandstand behind

Source: Postcard ca. 1938 Rose Stereograph Co., State Library of Victoria collection



Photograph 13: The pump shed from the Lake Daylesford dam wall embankment

Source: Postcard ca. 1920-1954 Rose Stereograph Co., State Library of Victoria collection

TOURISM

Lake Daylesford and surrounds are an integral part of the tourism experience for visitors coming to this region. Though not captured in the survey, incidental observations suggest that “exploring the springs” is a regular activity for visitors walking around the lake. The current presentation level is in stark contrast to the mid-high end tourism experience that Daylesford offers generally.

GOLDFIELDS TRACK

The reserve connects to the Goldfields Track; a state level recreation trail. and provides an opportunity to advertise Dayslesford to walkers on the track as a worthwhile destination

2.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF CENTRAL SPRINGS RESERVE

The significance of the Central Springs Reserve is centred around three notions;

1. The Indigenous and Colonial history of use of the site,
2. The presence of mineral springs and link to historic usage, and
3. Its potential as a present-day reserve that provides social and recreational opportunities.

The Central Springs Reserve is not listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, (it is included within the Victorian Heritage Inventory) but the community survey revealed that the site’s history is of interest to many. There is an opportunity to understand Indigenous land management and the subsequent physical modifications of the landscape wrought by gold mining and the creation of Lake Daylesford.

The early 20th Century use of the site as a passive recreational space for “taking the waters”, picnicing and dancing provides a direct link to the shaping of the Daylesford district and its role as a destination for health and tourism.

The Reserve’s location at the edge of Lake Daylesford provides a strategic opportunity to link existing walkings paths and encourage active recreation in the local community.

The established trees and strong sense of character that people enjoy also suggest an opportunity to encourage use as a gathering space for small and larger groups, supporting community connections. People are more likely to use a space that is attractive and well-maintained.



SECTION 3: PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Dja Dja Wurrung are recognised as Traditional Owners of Crown Land within this area of Victoria under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010.

These lands are jointly managed in perpetuity by the Traditional Owners and the State of Victoria.

Under the settlement agreement, the Dja Dja Wurrung people have traditional rights and will contribute to decisions on activities undertaken on all Crown land in the agreement area.

3.2 LAND STATUS & ZONING

Detailed Plans are provided as an appendix.

LAND STATUS

The Central Springs Reserve is included within the land parcel known as Allotment 15, Section 27 Township of Daylesford (15-27\PP5231, also known as 2 Leggatt Street, Daylesford VIC 3460. It is a Crown Land reserve with Hepburn Shire Council as the Committee of Management of the site on behalf of the State Government of Victoria.

ZONING

The land is zoned Public Parks and Recreation (PPRZ), with a Schedule to the PPRZ.

PLANNING OVERLAYS

Planning Overlays include Bushfire Management (BMO), Design & Development (DDO), DDO Schedule 4, Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO, ESO Schedule 1 and ESO Schedule 2.

Although not listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, the area of Central Springs is included in the Victorian Heritage Inventory, indicating a potential requirement for approval from Heritage Victoria.

The property report also states that "All or part of this parcel is an 'area of cultural heritage sensitivity'.

3.3 EXISTING STRATEGIES & PLANS

The Hepburn Shire Council has obligations under Federal and State legislation to provide equitable access and manage native vegetation.

The Victorian State Government assists land managers in the 'cohesive and sustainable management of mineral springs located on Crown Land.'

MINERAL SPRINGS STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN 2015 - 2024 (MSSMP),
VICTORIAN MINERAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (now dissolved)

The MSSMP provides strategic guidance for improvement and sustainability of Victoria's mineral springs. It also provides the basis for a Victorian Mineral Springs Reserves Grants Program. This is a potentially important source of external funding.

Objectives in the plan relevant to this master plan include:

- Visitors of all abilities should be able to access the range of mineral springs environments
- Mineral springs must be planned to ensure the natural and physical environment of each mineral spring is maintained, enhanced and developed to appropriate standards.
- Interpretive information provided at mineral springs should vary according to the attributes of the individual setting, but all should provide a basic range of information. The community's knowledge of Traditional Owner and post-European settlement cultural histories and the comprehensive value of each mineral spring should be articulated.

The plan lists the following opportunities and management priorities:

- Assist the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners and Hepburn Shire Council as partners on projects of joint relevance
- Implement aspects of the Lake Daylesford and Central Springs Reserve Master Plan that are relevant to the mineral springs
- Enhance walking tracks and the Central Springs landscape
- Provide signage to interpret both the diverse nature of the mineral springs and the heritage associated with the reserve

This document provides critical guidance in the development of the Central Springs Reserve Master Plan, which should align well with the above priorities to maximise opportunities for strategic and financial support.

The authoring body for this work has now been dissolved. DELWP maintains an interest in mineral springs located on Crown Land, and the Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee has been formed as a local body coordinated by HSC to oversee activities relating to mineral springs within the Shire.

"The Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee (MSRAC) will provide advice to assist Hepburn Shire Council plan for, prioritise and implement maintenance works and major projects across all Mineral Springs Reserves within the given parameters and funding opportunities."¹

Existing HSC produced Strategies and Plans with relevance to Central Springs have been reviewed as follows to ensure that the master plan is in strong alignment.

HSC COUNCIL PLAN 2017 - 2021

The plan includes the following Key strategic actions:

- 1.1 Continue to invest in our assets at a level greater than depreciation by delivering the annual asset renewal capital works program
- 2.2 Implement improvements in accordance with agreed programs and master plans to reserves, botanic gardens and other recreational spaces.
- 4.3 Implement Hepburn Shire Disability Access & Inclusion Plan actions
- 5.1 Develop plans and seek funding to construct priority projects from the Recreation Master Plans and the Walking and Cycling Strategy, and develop new Master Plans to guide future investment.
- 8.4 Develop and implement vegetation management plans on Council managed land and advocate to other public land managers to reduce fire risk on their land.
- 9.2 Implement actions to increase Council's control and management of noxious weeds on reserves and roadsides under Council's management.

DISABILITY ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN 2018 - 2022

This plan includes the following objectives:

1. To ensure all council services, recreation and infrastructure is accessible to people with a disability
3. To ensure that Hepburn Shire Council provide opportunities for people with a disability to participate in events, meetings or celebrations and feel valued and included in the community.

¹ Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, Hepburn Shire Council November 2018

The objectives set specific goals for access and inclusion within the Reserve and as a reflection of federal legislation carry significant weight.

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN JUNE 2018 - JULY 2019

While technically not a current reference document, this plan is still considered representative of HSC's position in relation to reconciliation.

The plan acknowledges the Shire's rich Aboriginal past, present and future and that *"Council seeks to recognise and promote the collections of stories that make up the shared history of the Shire."*²

HSC BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY 2018 - 2021

The Strategy includes the following aims:

1. Protect and enhance biodiversity
3. Support Community action and awareness

This master plan should therefore be developed to support the protection of existing mature vegetation, encourage further improvements in local ecosystems and make visible the management actions that promote this objective.

HSC RECREATION & OPEN SPACE STRATEGY 2016 - 2021

This Strategy identifies strategic pillars for recreation and open space.

In Section 4.1 Facilities, the highest priority for the community was to develop cycling and walking paths and improve the maintenance of open space areas for recreation.

In Section 4.4 Utilisation & Participation, it is noted that facilities should be "designed according to Universal Design Principles and also meet Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements. "

This Strategy provides additional rationale for the provision of safe equitable access that promotes passive recreation and links into existing walking trails.

LAKE DAYLESFORD RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009

The Management principles identified in this document have strong relevance to Central Springs Reserve. These include:

1. Manage the interface between historic, exotic landscape and surrounding natural bushland by protecting exotic trees, managing invasive weeds and implementing an indigenous planting program.
2. Providing a connection to the Great Dividing Trail

2 Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan July 2018, June 2019, HSC

5. Maintenance works should address conservation principles in terms of environmental sensitivity and sustainability, with improvement to areas of the reserve which provide for a variety of activities.
6. Built form to reflect historic and natural character of site, be accessible and utilise appropriate materials.
7. Protect historic landscape and interpret history including Aboriginal land ownership
8. Provide themed wayfinding and interpretive signage.

The plan also provides guidance on a revegetation palette and weed management strategies.

The plan proposes that “The concept of developing a historical interpretive trail should be further explored within the context of creating a Mineral Springs Trail with interpretive signage in partnership with the VMWC”.

3.4 STAKEHOLDERS

Within the land manager Hepburn Shire Council, several operational units have an interest in the development of the Master Plan. These include the Major Projects team delivering the Master Plan, Parks & Open Spaces who maintain the site, as well as officers representing the interests of biodiversity, access & inclusion and reconciliation.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) are the owner of the Crown land on which Central Springs is located.

The Dja Dja Wurrung are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Central Springs is located.

The Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee is a formal body overseen by HSC to review the planning and operation of mineral springs on public land within the Shire.

The Daylesford branch of Rotary are a community service organisation with ongoing ties to the site.

The Friends of Lake Daylesford group are a local community organisation focused on the presentation and function of the Lake Daylesford area.

Central Highlands Water is the water corporation responsible for water and sewerage in the Central Highlands region of Victoria.

Consideration should be given to engaging with Hepburn Wind when undertaking works in relation to hydroelectric infrastructure.



SECTION 4: VISION & STRATEGIC GOALS

This section of the report sets the way forward for the planning, development and management of the Central Springs Reserve.

A Vision Statement is proposed that sets a defined path for the future of the Central Springs Reserve. This is supported by a series of Strategic Objectives and Priorities that establish a framework for future decision making.

4.1 VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement has been developed as a result of the investigation and consultation processes conducted. It considers individual factors, issues and preferences, and synthesises them into a wholistic objective for the Reserve.

Central Springs Reserve: a well-presented and accessible passive reserve that presents cultural stories in a shaded setting with links to the surrounding bushland. The Reserve will be a place:

- for people of all abilities to gather in comfort
- to start exploring the local area
- to learn about the history of local Indigenous people, European and Chinese cultures
- where biodiversity is encouraged

4.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

PRESENTATION & AMENITY

Improve the presentation and amenity features of the reserve to improve user experience.

Rationale: The reserve exhibits a history of isolated and sometimes poorly constructed elements that detract from the aesthetic experience.

Priorities:

- Remove inappropriate or redundant site elements
- Site a multi-purpose shelter to provide shade, shelter, gathering and small performance opportunities
- Develop a simple palette of durable and aesthetically suitable materials
- Select furniture based upon the Hepburn Shire Furniture Palette

CULTURE & HISTORY

Communicate the Indigenous and more recent settlement history of the site.

Rationale: The community value the historic elements of the site including the mineral springs themselves. The Shire has a commitment to honour the Traditional Owners of the land and by extension identify their history in relation to the site.

Priorities:

- Install a shelter referencing the history and use of the site by the Traditional Owners
- Renovate and represent existing elements including mineral springs and the Pump Shed
- Reference aspects of the previous presentation style of the site (early 20th Century) in a new overall layout
- Install interpretive signage to communicate information about past use and cultural diversity of the site

CONNECTIVITY & WAYFINDING

Establish Central Springs Reserve as a significant place within the Lake Daylesford context.

Rationale: Wayfinding signage will aid visitors in experiencing more of the Lake Daylesford Regional Park

Priorities:

- Provide continuity with Lake Daylesford by installing the same family of furniture and fittings.
- Provide standard HSC wayfinding signage both inside and outside of the reserve to identify locations and amenities.

ACCESSIBILITY

Develop a DDA compliant path network that links the Reserve to accessible parking together with improved access to both Lake Daylesford and the existing car park.

Rationale: Current access to the reserve is not DDA compliant and dangerous in many places. The Shire has commitments to equitable access and needs to manage risks in public space.

Priorities:

- Identify an accessible entry to the Reserve from Fulcher Street with consideration from car park through to the Reserve
- Build upon this path to provide improved access for able-bodied users to the existing car park
- Identify an improved connection between Central Springs and Lake Daylesford.
- All paths within and to the Reserve should be designed to consider fatigue with appropriate resting points and furniture.
- Install signage at critical points to enable users to have confidence in wayfinding and the physical nature of the path ahead.
- Utilise universal design principles to maximise access and use of the Reserve generally.
- Review the need for provision of a public toilet in collaboration with Council's facilities department to ensure a reasonable level of service is provided in the locality.

BIODIVERSITY, INDIGENOUS VEGETATION & NATURAL PROCESSES

Encourage natural regeneration of the bush environment through weed management, improvements in soil cover and targeted revegetation.

Rationale: The surrounding indigenous forest is valued by the community, and natural regeneration processes will encourage a rich soil biome and biodiversity.

Priorities:

- Control native and exotic woody weeds on hillsides and environmental weeds along creekline
- Encourage management of leaf litter to cover bare soil but allow natural regeneration
- Avoid modification of sloped areas
- Improve soil moisture through areas of recharge and increased permeability generally
- Revegetate riparian areas with indigenous plants that will secure slopes, filter water and provide habitat.

EXOTIC VEGETATION

Preserve the emblematic landscape of the Reserve by preserving the shaded valley of deciduous trees set within the indigenous forest.

Rationale: The shade of the deciduous trees along with the history of the Reserve is highly valued by the local community.

Priorities:

- Ensure the root zones of the mature deciduous trees are enhanced by proposed works
- Ensure the mature deciduous trees are monitored and pruned as necessary to maintain health and vigour
- Increase soil moisture through permeable ground finishes and reducing compaction
- Monitor potentially invasive exotic weed species (such as the identified Basket Willow) and remove if necessary to improve local biodiversity and waterway health.