DEFENCE SITE
MARIBYRNONG

Engagement Summary
October 2018
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Defence Site Maribyrnong (DSM) is a 127.8 hectare parcel of Commonwealth land located in the City of Maribyrnong. The site has a broad history of uses, including connections to Aboriginal significant sites, the horse racing industry and the defence industry. It is currently owned by the Commonwealth Department of Defence and was historically used by them for a variety of activities.

DSM represents a major urban renewal opportunity in an established area already undergoing significant growth and transformation. The Victorian Government is committed to seeing DSM integrated as a valuable part of Northern Maribyrnong.

The Victorian Minister for Planning has instructed the Victorian Planning Authority to lead the planning for DSM in collaboration with Maribyrnong City Council, Transport for Victoria and other state and local government partners and the community.

To support the creation of a planning framework for the site, community engagement was undertaken between June and September 2018 through a variety of methods.

Broadly, feedback heard throughout this engagement reflected the need for this renewal process to:

- Maximise the natural assets of the site, notably the extensive Maribyrnong River frontage
- Consider connection and movement, noting the needs to create an integrated public transport system, improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity and mitigate road congestion
- Balance the housing footprint with open space
- Provide a transparent process, including the need for open dialogue around the environmental remediation process and set a robust framework that deliver community benefits

Some point of difference centred around built form and density where high density development may be appropriate if it created more open space, whereas others stated a preference to have no residential or just low density development

The key messages over page present a summary of what was heard across all methods of engagement with community and stakeholders.
Key Messages

These eight key messages summarise feedback heard across the whole process.

Celebrate the Heritage, and Stories of Place and Indigenous Culture
Build on the site’s wealth of stories and diverse history, with development at the site to showcase these rich stories, with a focus on the Indigenous significance of the site and the stories of defence.

Provide an Integrated Multi-Modal Public Transport System
Improve the public transport network to the area by extending the tram line and additional active transport infrastructure to improve cycling and pedestrian connections.

Create Quality Open Spaces and Places for Recreation
Provide significant open spaces for public recreation and community use, to support the future community and fulfill the need for quality open space in the broader area.

Address current congestion issues
Ensure the road network has the capacity to anticipate future usage once development is complete, and sufficient carparking is factored into planning.

Enable Access to the Maribyrnong River and Natural Assets
The Maribyrnong River and spaces around it must be completely open and accessible, providing the missing link in the broader pedestrian and cycling paths and open space network.

Provide a Diversity of Housing Types and Residents
Ensure development becomes an extension of the current community, open to all, encouraging a mix of people by incorporating a diversity of housing types, including social and affordable housing.

Ensure Transparent Communication Around Remediation
Provide the community with regular information about the environmental remediation process, contaminants, the extent of the clean up, as well as time frames for doing so.

Incorporate Authentic Places to Meet and Linger
Shared spaces, public realm infrastructure and retail spaces provided to create places for the community to meet, enjoy a coffee and satisfy their daily needs.
The Defence Site Maribyrnong (DSM) is a 127.8 hectare parcel of Commonwealth land located at 2 Cordite Avenue, Maribyrnong, in the City of Maribyrnong.

The site has a broad history of uses, including connections to Aboriginal significant sites, the horse racing industry and the defence industry.

Introduction

The Department of Defence has commenced an open market disposal process to sell the site on behalf of the Commonwealth. DSM represents a major urban renewal opportunity in an established area already undergoing significant growth and transformation.

The location of the site and its historical use by the Department of Defence present some key considerations for future development, particularly in relation to land contamination, transport access, heritage and the Maribyrnong River connection.

The Victorian Minister for Planning has instructed the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to lead the planning for DSM in collaboration with Maribyrnong City Council (MCC), Transport for Victoria, state and local government partners and the community.

Purpose

Village Well and MosaicLab facilitated a process of engagement with key stakeholders and the community in partnership with the VPA, and MCC. Engagement took place between June and September 2018.

This summary outlines key messages heard from community and stakeholders around their aspirations and opportunities and challenges for DSM. It is intended that this document provides a broad summary of ideas, and it is acknowledged that the best efforts have been made to reference as many comments as possible by individuals and organisations. This engagement process and summary report should be used as the basis for future planning.
Place Context

The DSM sits within the Northern Maribyrnong precinct, framed by the banks of the Maribyrnong River on its northern and western edges. The image below demonstrates the precinct’s context.
OVERVIEW

The VPA and MCC invited community members and stakeholders to share their vision and thoughts about the future of the DSM precinct.

The purpose of the community engagement was to inform the community of the planning process and to seek views and input into the future planning of the area.

Engagement took place between June and September 2018 and was designed around providing a clear understanding of community and stakeholder needs, aspirations and preferences for the development of a planning framework for the DSM.

A variety of engagement methods were used to seek community feedback including an online survey, targeted stakeholder conversations and an open community workshop.

Previous Engagement

The Maribyrnong Shared Vision was prepared in 2010 by VicUrban (currently Development Victoria) to establish the community’s values and aspirations for DSM and provide an important starting point for further planning of the site.

VicUrban invited the communities of Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley to help shape the Shared Vision for the future of the project to build local awareness and identify the local community’s hopes and aspirations for the site. This included the creation of five shared goals:

- Celebrate the river and landscape
- Build on the histories of the site
- Provide a new dimension for Maribyrnong - building on the strengths of the existing community
- Create a diverse and inclusive community
- Keep an eye to the future
Methods of Engagement

The community were notified of the engagement process and provided with project information through the VPA’s website, with FAQs, a precinct map, online survey platform and workshop registration portal. The VPA and MCC’s social media and website platforms were used to promote engagement methods and events.

A project introduction postcard was sent to 4500 households in Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley. This provided project information, key engagement dates and a link to the online survey.

The online survey was conducted between 18 June and 6 August. In total there were 342 survey responses.

Listening Posts were held in three locations in July and August including Footscray Train Station, Highpoint Shopping Centre, and the Avondale Heights Library and Learning Centre, to raise awareness of the project and invite visitors, workers, commuters, and students to complete the survey.

Targeted conversations were held with key stakeholders including representatives from local environmental groups, historical and heritage organisations and adjacent landowners. Additional conversations were held with tertiary education institutions, health institutions, business organisations, and social and affordable housing groups to understand the broader needs of the western region in planning for the DSM. Participants were asked to reflect on their aspirations for the future development of the site.

Engagement also included two 3-hour community workshops. The workshops were attended by a combined total of approximately 90 participants. Activities were informed by survey results and utilised reference imagery and maps to facilitate discussion around visioning and opportunities.

Engagement with the Wurundjeri elders continues to be an integral part of the process. In addition to inclusion in this process, VPA, MCC and Defence will continue to engage to ensure ongoing and inclusive integration of Indigenous perspectives and cultural heritage value in the creation of the planning framework.

Ongoing Communications & Website Information
Conducted between 18 June and 6 August, survey questions sought to gather inputs from the community around how they use the area currently and what opportunities should be considered in future planning for the site. Of 342 responses, a broad spectrum of age groups contributed including 76% between the ages of 25 and 55.

**What best describes your relationship with the local area?**

- **74% Residents**
  - 26% Visitors
  - 17% Commuter
  - 10% Other
  - 9% Worker
  - 5% Business owner
  - 3% Student

Participants could select more than one response.

**What do you value about the local area currently?**

- The river and natural resources
- Places to shop
- Public transport
- Cycling access and infrastructure
- Pedestrian movement and footpath network
- Safe streets and places
- Sport recreational and play areas

**Which mode of transport do you typically use to travel to and from the local area?**

- 81% Car
- 41% Public transport
- 37% Walking
- 29% Cycling
- 14% Bus

Participants could select more than one response.
When planning for population growth, what are the most important aspects to consider?

1. Public transport connections
2. A network of parks, recreation and open spaces
3. Protecting the environment and natural assets
4. Improved capacity of the road network
5. Suitable and affordable range of housing options

What type of community facilities are needed to accommodate future growth?

- Parks and public open space
- Maribyrnong River access
- Schools and childcare facilities
- Community gardens
- Healthcare services

"Having access to the river helps me unwind and entertain the family."

"The traffic congestion and lack of public transport needs to be addressed long before this development gets off the ground."
Two 3-hour community workshops were held on July 26th and 30th at MCC. The intention of the workshop was to build on previous engagement and key themes emerging from the community survey through facilitated workshop activities. The Mayor and Councilors introduced the sessions and table discussions were guided by experts including representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency, Transport for Victoria, heritage consultants, VPA and Council officers.

Opportunities identified in the workshops

- Provide affordable housing
- Protect and enhance the indigenous flora and fauna
- Preserve the heritage buildings
- Maintain access to River
- Provide education facilities (primary and secondary)
- Improve public transport and road network
- Preserve significant Indigenous sites with DSM
- Ensure Indigenous history and culture of the site is regarded as highly as the defence history

Challenges identified in the workshops

- Addressing environmental contamination
- Keeping neighbouring areas safe during the remediation process
- Maintaining heritage buildings
- Limiting development to allow for open space
- Traffic congestion within the area is already at breaking point
- Public Transport must be improved
- Entering and exiting the site
Imagine this place in the Year 2030

Common words used in personal vision reflections where people were asked to write a postcard to describe the future place

“IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SUNNY DAY AND I HAVE STOPPED AT THE CAFE BY THE RIVER AFTER RIDING MY BIKE. THERE IS PLENTY OF QUIET SPACE TO SIT AND RELAX AND SEE THE KIDS PLAY AND EXPLORE”
THEMED DISCUSSIONS

Based on the opportunities and challenges raised, workshop participants explored key themes in further details. Group discussions explored the key considerations and their implication on future planning for the DSM site.

In addition to these themes, broad consensus reflected the need to ensure a balance between development and community benefit. This also spoke to the need for a transparent and open process from all government stakeholders.

Housing

Housing to cater for a diverse community
- Mix of people and housing catering to their different needs
- Include social and affordable housing to provide a place for all

Provide a diversity of housing typologies
- Inter-generational models and ability to downsize
- Innovative housing models such as co-housing
- Catering for families of different sizes

Balance housing footprint with open space
- High rise is appropriate only if it allows for more open space
- Do not overpopulate the site

Modest scale of built form
- Scale and variation in built form to ensure the site does not look overdeveloped
- Cluster housing density along the Cordite Avenue edge, leaving more open space

Limited if any housing along the riverfront
- Maintain open, public access to the river
- Not become another Edgewater Estate with privatisation of the riverfront

THE COMMUNITY’S MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Housing on site must deliver environmental, social and economical outcomes

Using higher density housing form must deliver quality amenity and open space on the rest of the site

Affordable and diverse housing types
Environment & Remediation

Ensuring the site is remediated to a high standard
- Defence required to clean up the site
- EPA oversee that the site is remediated to a high standard
- Process of remediation is carefully undertaken, (i.e. dust and airborne contaminants managed during remediation process)

Transparent communications
- Understanding the level of contamination and what parts of the site are contaminated
- Providing information to residents around the remediation process

Retained flora and fauna
- Where possible protect and retain flora and fauna throughout remediation

Consider climate change
- Create controls to ensure inclusive sustainable measures in design
- Plan for future environmental needs given it is a long term project

River & Open Space

River frontage should be set aside as open space
- Create paths along the river front and connect to existing paths neighbouring the site
- Create areas of passive open space
- Establish large wildlife corridors

Improve and maintain the health of the river
- Establish wetlands in the north of the site, similar to the Afton Street Conservation Reserve
- Aspire to make the river swimmable
- Fishing infrastructure connected with open space along the river frontage

Cultivated open spaces
- Plant fruit trees throughout the site
- Incorporate educational signage into open spaces that explain flora and fauna
- Urban agriculture as a community facility, including community gardens and orchards

THE COMMUNITY’S MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Existing habitat not harmed throughout remediation
The land is decontaminated and able to be used by the community
Community are consulted with frequent and accurate information provided throughout the process
Any future development takes into account rising sea levels and fire risks

The Community’s Measures of Success

Plenty of open space
Healthy river that is swimmable
Surveys demonstrate wildlife thriving
Open spaces used by people who live outside of the site
Large setback from the river
Heritage & Cultural Values

Adaptive re-use of heritage buildings
- Use heritage buildings for community facilities, for example the Officers Mess could become a café
- Heritage retention will create a strong sense of place; retain enough heritage to tell the story
- Include historic interpretation throughout

Celebrate the rich place stories in design
- Street names reflect historical uses
- Street amenity should be in a similar historic style, for example lighting and signage
- White Cypress trees considered as natural heritage of the site
- Use public art to tell the story

Protect Indigenous cultural history
- Ensure the elders of the community have a chance to have their say
- Maintain Indigenous culture through education opportunities
- Create awareness of the indigenous environment through signage.
- Link to other significant indigenous sites nearby

Access & Movement

Better served by public transport
- Increase public transport to the whole western region of Melbourne
- Diversity of modes on offer including light rail, trains and bus
- Create integrated transport links and interchanges to enhance the frequency of services

Integrated cycling and pedestrian paths
- Pedestrian and cycling bridges connecting to neighbouring sites and open space
- Improve river crossings

Carparking and road congestion post development
- Increased population will put pressure on capacity of the road network
- Providing car parking within the site to ensure street amenity and carparking needs are not affected beyond DSM
- Consider creating a car-free site

THE COMMUNITY’S MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Historic buildings are retained

History and key stories are accessible to all

Indigenous community elders are engaged in the ongoing planning

Clear articulation and celebration of indigenous cultural heritage

The site and the surrounding area are well serviced by an excellent public transport system

Ability to cycle and walk through the site and neighbouring areas with ease
Community Facilities

Providing lifelong learning facilities
• Kindergarten and childcare facilities
• Primary and secondary schools
• Higher education facilities
• Intergenerational learning and co-location of aged-care and childcare facilities

Civic and cultural spaces
• Ensure cultural infrastructure is incorporated into the planning framework
• Large library as a central meeting place
• Connect with the Maribyrnong Community Centre

Diversity of formal and informal meeting spaces
• Public performance spaces
• Artistic and creative industry studios
• Spaces hireable for community short-term or ongoing (for example, Men’s Sheds)
• Places for recreation (for example, sporting grounds and outdoor exercise equipment)

Co-located facilities
• Intergenerational spaces with facilities to encourage ageing in place
• Combine community facilities with commercial spaces

THE COMMUNITY’S MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Opportunities for learning for all
Ease of access to services and facilities
High utilisation of existing heritage buildings for community facilities
Commercial investment in social benefit and reasonable proportion of land reserved for community facilities

Employment & Commercial Uses

Encourage small business and localised employment
• Local retail spaces encouraging small business start ups
• Local fresh food market will create a village feel
• Co-working spaces
• Create the right mix, alive all day every day

Improve the broader commercial offer
• Currently under-serviced
• Commercial offer to generate local economic opportunities

Become a destination to encourage visitation
• Create social spaces which are thriving during day and night
• Restaurant and main street shopping strip with a different offer to Highpoint

Retail and commercial spaces in key locations
• Retail along the river edge
• Retail offer adjacent open space

THE COMMUNITY’S MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Localised independent retail, servicing the needs of locals
Minimal distance between place of residence and employment opportunities
Generate economic activity beneficial to the broader region
Become a regional hub
5.0 STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

Targeted conversations were held with key stakeholders including representatives from key community interest groups (environmental groups, historical and heritage organisations), adjacent landowners, tertiary education and health institutions, business organisations, social and affordable housing groups, and Wurundjeri elders. The intention was to understand the broader needs of the western region in planning for the DSM.

What are the Challenges?

Contamination of the site is a significant obstacle

Moving people in and out of the site will be a challenge with current road network

Existing traffic congestion and a lack of public transport

Creating a development that is affordable for a range of people and is not perceived as being exclusive

Integrating the development into the current local context

Maintaining as many of the historic buildings and significant vegetation as possible throughout remediation

Creating a development that supports and enhances the native flora and fauna of the site

Coordinating population projections for the site need coordination with stakeholders given the impact on planning for future health services and education needs

What are the Opportunities?

Create an appropriate sized development that is well blended with surrounding urban fabric

Use the development to enhance the road network and public transport infrastructure

The potential to improve the public transport network is key; bridge the missing links in the West

Maintain the historic buildings and use them as community facilities and social spaces

Create public spaces along the Maribyrnong River that connects to neighbouring public spaces

Make areas along the Maribyrnong River completely accessible and a destination for people across Melbourne

Incorporate a reasonable amount of affordable and social housing that will ensure a diverse mix of people

Bring jobs and greater economic opportunity to the West

Become a world leading sustainable development

Connect with surrounding indigenous sites and promote the indigenous story of the West
How would you make this a great place?

**Business and Economic Development**
- Placing economic development of the western region and the creation of jobs at the forefront of planning
- Strengthening the economic position of the Melbourne’s West, offering local employment opportunities
- Ensuring there is a variety of employment opportunities within the site, that can provide for people of varying ages, backgrounds and skill sets

**Heritage and Cultural Values**
- Maintaining and enhancing the historic buildings on the site and share the stories of its past, from Indigenous heritage to its defence and wartime history
- Connecting with a broader Melbourne defence history narrative to become a destination place

**Education and Health**
- Understanding population projections from the outset, both within the site and the broader catchment area, to ensure education and health facilities have the capacity to cater for all
- Ensuring the site contains varied learning facilities for people of all ages and for people of all ages
- Providing housing options catered to students and health industry workers

**Community Wellbeing and Places to Meet**
- Creating more than just housing but places to enable people to build social connections and networks, through public space and community programming
- Providing an intergenerational approach with housing diversity to enable people to age in their local area
- Ensuring future development creates a village-feel with lush landscaping, community spaces, areas for passive and active recreation, and a main street feel with localised retail

**Transport and Connectivity**
- Servicing DSM with a multi modal reliable public transportation system
- Ensuring the site is well connected to local activity centres including Werribee, Sunshine and Footscray, not only Melbourne’s CBD
- Upgrading the road network and current public transport system prior to development

**Environment and the River**
- Creating an environment that is thriving once it is completely remediated through a transparent public process
- Ensuring the Maribyrnong River is completely accessible and enhances the permeability of the area for pedestrians
- Prioritising the use of indigenous plants throughout public spaces

“IT WILL BE GREAT TO CAPTURE THE STORY OF THE PLACE ... THESE OPPORTUNITIES DON’T COME UP VERY OFTEN AND I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THIS BECOME A CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL PRECINCT THAT CAN [CATALYSE] COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS”
Measures of success are the criteria that will determine the impact and effectiveness of the engagement process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall participation rates</td>
<td>Rate of participation across all engagement activities including:</td>
<td>• Majority of identified stakeholder groups participated in the engagement process with 13 targeted conversations held (80% of identified stakeholders)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 70% of identified stakeholder groups participated in the engagement process</td>
<td>• 342 people participated in the community survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• More than 100 people participate in the survey</td>
<td>• 89 people attended the community workshop with a second workshop provided to account for greater than anticipated interest in the process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• More than 40 people attend the community workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community workshop feedback</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the community workshop process</td>
<td>As reflected in the participation survey, 75% or more of participants showed high levels of satisfaction with the community workshop process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reach of different communications activities</td>
<td>Number of people who were reached online and offline by communication activities undertaken</td>
<td>More than 5,000 were reached through various methods including the distribution of project postcards, social media posts and electronic communications</td>
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<td>Majority of input/ideas provided within scope</td>
<td>Proportion of comments made outside scope of project (e.g. on non-negotiable or unrelated issues)</td>
<td>Less than 10% of participant input provided was out of scope or not relevant to the planning process</td>
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<td>Geographic and demographic spread of participants</td>
<td>Diverse and equal spread of different types of groups represented in the process</td>
<td>Multiple groups representing different types of stakeholders participated</td>
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<td>Number of different communication channels used</td>
<td>Variety of different types of communication channels (e.g. social media platforms across multiple agencies)</td>
<td>Multiple different communication channels were used across VPA and Maribyrnong City Council</td>
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This engagement summary provides an overview of what was heard throughout the community engagement process in between June and September 2018. This will inform future plans for the site.

Ongoing project phases and outputs

The VPA and MCC will now create a draft DSM Vision. The community will be invited to provide feedback on this before being finalised.

Following this, there will be more opportunities for the community to have a say as the planning for DSM progresses.

Lessons Learned from this process

Future engagement will address identified gaps in the process and build on lessons learned from this round of broad engagement with community and stakeholders.

The following key lessons reflect an internal review of the approach and feedback from participants:

- Provide more information around the ongoing engagement process, including how and when the community and stakeholders can be involved
- Articulate the roles of varied government agencies and differentiation of process and obligation between Defence and VPA
- Broaden stakeholder and community input to include greater representation of school children (under 18 years), young people (18-25 years), and older people (over 70 years)