

# Mathison Park Management Plan

Mackeys Road, Churchill



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## Disclaimer

Indigenous Design Environmental Management and any associated contractors engaged for this project have endeavoured to provide an accurate and current document. However, this document is not guaranteed to be without flaw or omissions. The information and recommendations provided are current at the time of writing but do not account for any changes in circumstances after the time of publication. Indigenous Design Environmental Management accepts no liability for any error, loss or other consequence caused or arising from using the information provided within this report.

## Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the contribution to this review by the volunteer members of the Mathison Park Special Committee and staff from Latrobe City Council.

## Background

The Management Plan for Mathison Park has been developed following a review of the existing 2002 management plan. This revised management plan will guide the future management of the park by the Mathison Park Special Committee and Latrobe City Council.

Mathison Park is located within the Latrobe City Council municipality, approximately 750 metres from the centre of the Churchill Township. The park is located on Mackeys Road, Churchill and has an area of 38.7ha encompassing a large man-made lake - Lake Hyland (4.9ha in size). Lake Hyland was constructed in 1966, with the park's development commencing in the 1970s. The land is owned by Latrobe City Council and has a Special Committee appointed.

Robin Crocker & Associates (Crocker, 2002) developed a Management Plan to guide development and management of the park in 2002. This plan primarily dealt with improvement works to the facilities, extending revegetation activities and highlighting the conservation and historic aspects of the park.

Due to the length of time since the original plan was produced and the change in members of the Special Committee, this review and the development of a new management plan provides guidance and direction to assist the current Special Committee in undertaking their role, enabling structured development of the park and identification of priorities.

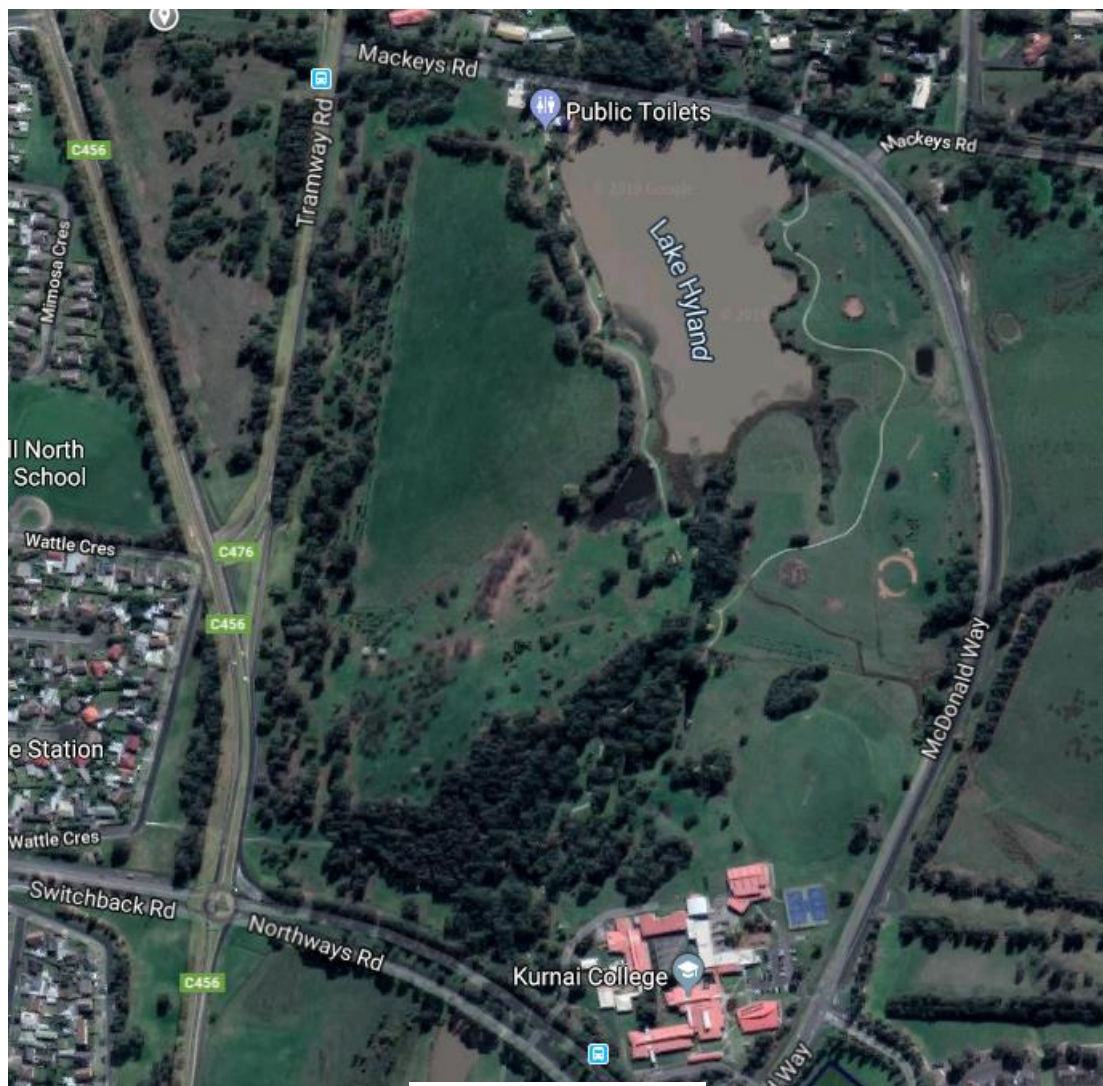


Figure 1- Mathison Park

# Values

## History

A detailed history of the park can be found in *Appendix 2* of the 2002 Management Plan (Crocker, 2002) or on the Mathison Park website ([www.mathisonparkchurchill.com.au/history](http://www.mathisonparkchurchill.com.au/history)). Mathison Park was originally designated as a botanical park when it was acquired from the previous Hare family farm.

## Natural Environment

Intact remnant vegetation can be found along parts of Tramway Road / Monash Way just outside the park's boundary. Scattered large old trees occur on Mackeys Road and remnant trees and understorey species remain along Eel Hole Creek, Mackeys Road and McDonald Way. Large sections of the park are dominated by introduced pasture species largely due to its previous grazing history.

Large amounts of revegetation have been undertaken with vegetation historically occurring in the local area, adjacent to and to the west of Eel Hole Creek and surrounding the perimeter of the Lake. Themed plantings such as Gippsland, Victorian and Australian species have been undertaken as part of indigenous education and the creation of an arboretum in the south western corner adjacent to Tramway Road. Australian and New Zealand conifers and deciduous plantings have also been completed to the south east of the O'Halloran and Hare homestead.

The park provides habitat for native birds and vegetation surrounding, and within the Lake is used by a variety of fish, water birds and frogs, with roosting areas and nesting opportunities available. Areas of past revegetation will also support woodland birds, arboreal mammals and reptiles.

Blue-green algae has adversely impacted Lake Hyland in the past and litter is also evident in Eel Hole Creek either from washing downstream or as part of on-going litter issues associated with the park usage and nearby School.

## Recreation

The park is widely used by the community for passive recreation such as dog walking, picnicking, and exercising by visitors interested in the park's history and other natural features. The current track network circuit connecting to Northway Road, Tramway Road and Mackeys Road provides a walking/running and bicycle track and is used as a recreational circuit of the park.

Over recent years the playground area adjacent to the carpark off Mackeys Road has been developed with the installation of exercise equipment, swings, monkey bars, slides, various other equipment and shade structures. Current facilities to support these recreational activities include picnic tables, toilets, multi-purpose shelters and BBQ's, fishing platforms and open grassed areas.

The park has also been used for the holding of events associated with model boat racing and the yearly Junior Fishing Day competition held in October / November each year.

## Scope & Purpose

The development of the Mathison Park Management Plan for the entire park will guide any future development of the site for the benefit of all users, whilst ensuring the conservation and enhancement of natural, cultural and historic values. The scope of the management plan includes:

- Outline short and long-term objectives for the management of the park;
- Review the current management plan (2002) and identify completed actions;
- Review existing priorities from the current management plan and identify new priorities if and where necessary;
- Provide a balanced management of priorities based on public use including asset maintenance, weed management, risk management, and flora and fauna management;
- Develop a zoned map/concept plan which highlights the functions of the site and guides future development;
- Identify any future development / major maintenance opportunities for the site;
- Provide recommendations on how the site will be managed into the future;
- Develop a costed, prioritised plan for any major development/major maintenance actions; and
- Identify who will be responsible for actions/maintenance or tasks/development.

# Management Plan Development

The steps involved in the development of this Plan are identified below and summarised in Figure 2.

## Literature Review and Background

Relevant documentation and reports were reviewed to obtain an understanding of the context and Latrobe City Council policies. This included the Play Space Strategy (Leisure Planners, 2016) and similar management plans developed for other parks to assist in the development of the key components of the plan. Actions identified in the previous Management Plan (Crocker, 2002) have been assessed to determine their current relevance and whether they have been completed (see *Appendix 1* Background Document). Where the action is still valid, it has been kept or revised as appropriate.

An initial site visit and workshop session was undertaken with the Special Committee and Latrobe City Council staff to begin the process of identifying the current management issues and direction for the management plan.

## Survey & Consultation

Latrobe City Council was consulted to discuss specifics of the existing management plan. Consultation with government agencies included the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, Country Fire Authority, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Environment Protection Authority and Fisheries Victoria.

To engage with the broader community a questionnaire was developed seeking feedback on the community's ideas and future vision for the park, as well as general details about what they value most about the park. The survey was open for a period of 6 weeks and advertised through Latrobe City Councils social media, websites, community newsletters such as the Churchill & District News, local radio and through direct email.

162 responses to the questionnaire were received from community members, user groups and the Special Committee. A summary of the feedback received is provided below.

## Analysis

The results of the consultation were used to develop a zoned concept plan to identify broad principles and areas of focus for specific actions and outcomes.

Responses were collated and assessed against the vision and goals of the plan. Suggested issues and recommended actions were developed and then ranked against key selection criteria to determine their priority.

## Management Plan

The Mathison Park Management Plan has been developed using the knowledge and understanding gained from the above process with more detailed discussion on various issues contained within the accompanying Background document.

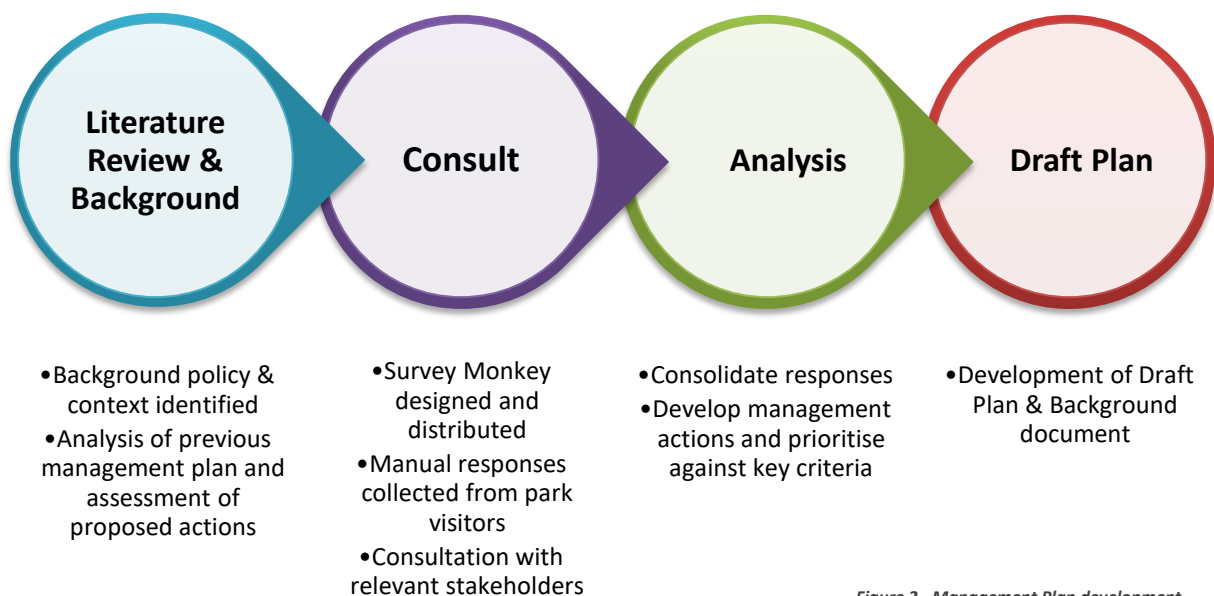
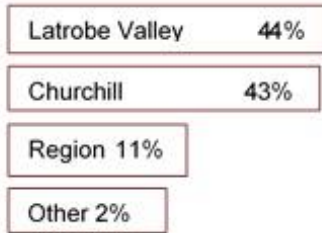


Figure 2 - Management Plan development

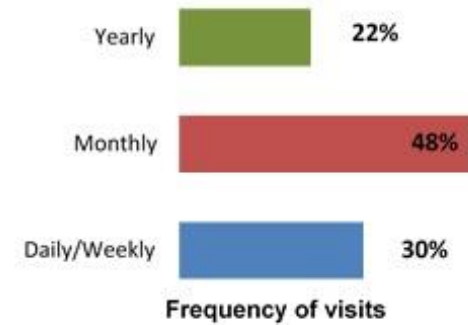
# Community Survey Summary



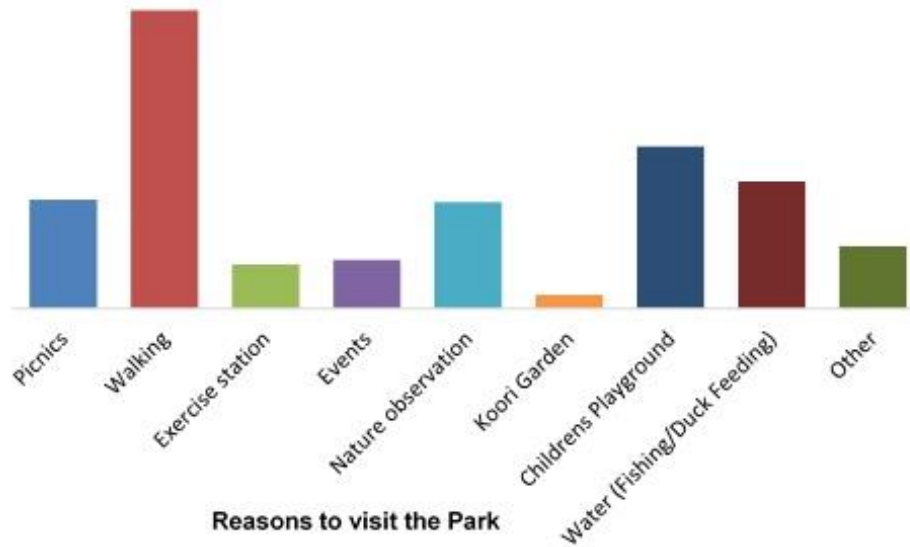
Home town of Park visitors



Most popular modes of transport to the Park



Frequency of visits



Reasons to visit the Park



83%

of Respondents thought Mathison Park could be improved



Most important attributes of the Park

*"I would love to see it expanded where the path goes off into the rest of the paddocks which would give choices and difference to the walking, jogging, cycling routes."*

*"A great resource to expand on for people with interests in conservation and the natural environment."*

*"Great to include a natural playground such as logs and rocks etc to climb and jump over for children/families."*



Facilities & Maintenance



Playground Improvements



Awareness Events Signage



Path Network



Conservation Nature

Top 5 attributes that would attract more visitors to the Park



## Vision

Mathison Park is a regional park that provides a popular, peaceful and attractive setting for children's play, sightseeing, walking, socialising, observing nature and picnicking.

Residents and visitors to the region visit the park to attend events, relax and enjoy the attractive setting. Visitors take pleasure in learning the historical, cultural and environmental significance of the park and enjoy the atmosphere that events at the park provide.

A unique regional level play space and a high-quality path network which encourages physical activity, healthy lifestyle and a greater relationship with the environment.

# Park management recommendations

Current and future management issues and activities require clear recommendations and priorities to assist in Mathison Park's continued development and on-going use.

To ensure the management of the park is undertaken in a planned and structured way, areas have been zoned according to current and ongoing planned use. This zoning provides a clear understanding of the purpose and therefore management requirements of each zone. The following zones have been identified (see *Appendix 2* of Background document):

## Conservation

A low use area managed for conservation purposes:

- Protect and enhance existing remnant native vegetation;
- Enhance revegetated areas to increase habitat potential using locally indigenous species to create links and corridors;
- Used for passive recreation such as walking, bird watching and educational purposes;
- Retention of habitat elements, including logs and organic litter;
- No slashing activities undertaken; and
- Regular weed control activities to remove noxious and environmental weeds.

## Recreation

A high usage area managed as the main recreational and social activity focal point of the park:

- High impact activities;
- Activity node for park user groups;
- Location of recreation infrastructure;
- Concentration of car parking;
- Regular maintenance of vegetation through slashing / mowing;
- Regular weed control within track network and adjacent to infrastructure;
- Regular assessment and completion of maintenance required for facilities and infrastructure; and
- Location of signage and information to communicate about the park and its regulations

## Education

Concentration of efforts to provide education on European and indigenous cultural heritage and the environment of the Park:

- Maintenance and enhancement of existing education assets such as Hare homestead, arboretum and indigenous cultural plantings;
- Collaboration with relevant user groups and stakeholders to ensure relevance and accuracy of material communicated;
- Improve and enhance existing education areas and infrastructure; and
- Location of interpretive infrastructure such as signage, bird watching areas, etc.

## Open Parkland

An intermittent usage area that is used for passive recreation and available for a range of activities/events:

- Slashed regularly for fire prevention purposes and to keep as an open grassed area;
- Regular noxious weed control activities;
- Creation of quiet areas and associated infrastructure such as seats and shelters;
- Passive recreation such as walking;
- Potential for staging of intermittent events; and
- Location of grouped plantings / tree avenues, etc to provide shade, interest, colour contrast and vistas for the park.



Recommendations to address the identified current and future management activities and issues have been developed in consultation with the Mathison Park Special Committee and Latrobe City Council. As previously discussed, actions identified in the previous management plan (Crocker, 2002) have been assessed to determine their current relevance and where the action is still valid, it has been kept or revised as appropriate (see *Appendix 1* of Background document).

Recommendations have been prioritised based on key priorities (detailed below), along with a weighting (Table 1):

- Maintenance - Works that must be completed as part of the Special Committee’s terms of reference and current maintenance grant.
- Activation - Encouragement of use from other groups, small events and festivals to attract diverse visitation.
- Development - Works to further develop the park with additional funding if available.

*Table 1 – Criteria Framework for allocation of Priority to Recommendations*

<b>Key Priorities</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probability of funding</li> <li>• Volunteer sustainability</li> <li>• Identified priority through consultation process</li> </ul>	1
Activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the park to a regional facility</li> <li>• Increase in regional visitation</li> <li>• Use of park for Events/Festivals/Community groups</li> </ul>	2
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative Requirement</li> <li>• Risk Reduction</li> <li>• Preventing a decline in the condition of assets</li> </ul>	3

An analysis of actions (37 in total) against this priority framework has been included in the Management Plan Background document (*Appendix 7*). This priority matrix and framework can be applied to any new issue the Special Committee or Council may have to deal with into the future, with the ability to be consistent in assigning a priority to the issue.

Details of recommendations actions are provided in the following sections:

- Maintenance Program (Actions 1-16); and
- Future Actions:
  - Development (Actions 17-31)
  - Activation (Actions 33-39).

## Park Maintenance Program

Set out below is a yearly program that details timing for the actions identified as on-going maintenance, for activities such as monitoring of assets, revegetation, weed control, fire management, and general maintenance works for Years 1 - 5 of implementation of the Mathison Park Management Plan (2019).

- **Monitoring:** Details items to be monitored to determine maintenance requirements and reduce risk.
- **Pest Plant Management:** Details the period weed control should be undertaken across a yearly period. The three visits listed below (per year) should cover the timing required for the species identified for control in the park. Willow control is suggested to occur in August and Blackberry in December.
- **Pest Animal Management:** Allows for monitoring to determine if and when control by a suitably qualified contractor should be undertaken.
- **Revegetation:** The location and species selection should be determined early in the season in order to prepare and order plants. All plants should be staked and guarded and have maintenance which includes weed suppression.
- **Bushfire Vegetation Management:** To occur prior to the Fire Danger Period and includes slashing / mowing, removal of woody debris in the priority area; and maintaining emergency vehicle access and clearances. Grass slashing is also required as part of park aesthetics.
- **General Maintenance:** This includes ongoing maintenance of the path surface, removing fallen vegetation off paths; undertaking yearly repairs to existing infrastructure such as shelters, seating and BBQ's as issues are identified through monitoring.

Timing	Zone	Action #	Action Description	Approx. Cost	Timing											
					Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Monitoring</b>																
Each Year	Recreation	1	Assess tracks and boardwalks to identify maintenance requirements	Nil												
	Recreation	3	Assess existing infrastructure such as shelters, toilets, BBQs, tables and platforms to identify maintenance requirements													
	All	8	Assess current signage to determine maintenance or replacement requirements													
	Conservation	15	Prevent slashing or other disturbance to Plains Grassy Woodland remnant on Tramway Road													
Years 2 & 4 (as required)	All	6	Undertake arborist inspections adjacent to high use areas to identify and address risk from limb fall													
Year 5	All	10	Review the Management Plan	tbd												
<b>Pest Plant Management</b>																
Each Year	All	7	Undertake CaLP woody weed control	\$4,000												
			Undertake herbaceous and grass CaLP weed control													
	Conservation		Undertake Environmental Weed Control													

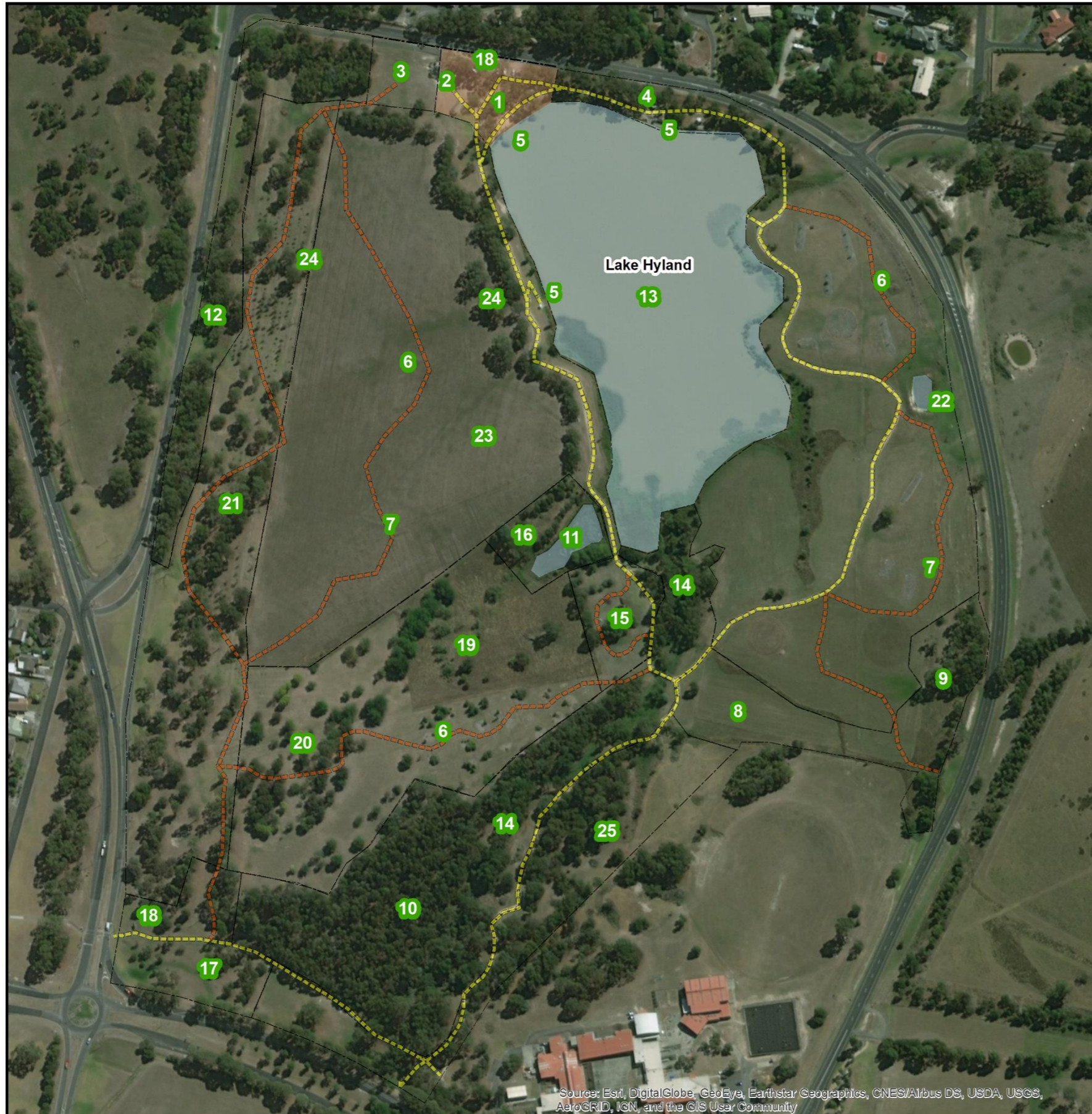
Timing	Zone	Action #	Action Description	Approx. Cost	Timing													
					Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
<b>Pest Animal Management</b>																		
Each Year	All	7	Identify active rabbit burrow / fox dens	Nil														
			Fumigate and collapse any active rabbit burrows / fox dens	tbd														
<b>Revegetation</b>																		
As Required	Open Parkland	11	Continue with themed clump plantings.	tbd														
		11 & 16	Seek assistance from LCC horticulturalists for species selection - Do not plant known environmental weeds within the park.	Nil														
		11	Order plants for next seasons planting															
			Planting preparation weed control															
			Undertake Planting	tbd														
			Revegetation Maintenance															
<b>Bushfire Vegetation Management</b>																		
Each Year	All	4	Undertake slashing of open grass areas	\$1,200														
	Open Parkland		Undertake fuel reduction works / tidy up	\$300														
	All		Ensure continued access for fire fighting vehicles / equipment	Nil														
<b>General Maintenance</b>																		
As Required	All	1 & 3	Undertake required maintenance of infrastructure, tracks and boardwalks	\$5,000														
		9	Upgrade / repair/ install tables and seats	\$500														
		8	Replace / upgrade signage	\$500														
Each Year	Recreation	2	Keep paths clear of obstructions and weed free	\$1,000														
	All	5	Qualified arborist to undertake required tree works	Nil														
Quarterly	All	12	Replace / upgrade information in shelters at park entrances	Nil														
Once	Open Parkland	13	Remove disused grazing fences															

## Future Recommended Actions

Development							
No.	Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost (\$)	Approvals or Consultation Required	Benefit	Responsibility for Implementation	Potential Funding Source
17	Progressively extend and upgrade the existing pathway network to an asphalt or concrete surface as depicted in <i>Appendix 4</i> of Background report.	High	\$1,200 per 100 metres	VicHealth Council	Create a recreation circuit and opportunities for further recreational activity.	Committee	Council VicHealth Latrobe Valley Authority
18	Construct a regional level play space consistent with the agreed design within this plan.	High	\$781,000	Council	Improve and increase the play space at the park. Encourage activity in children.	Council	Council
19	Investigate whether to relocate current exercise equipment to the south of playground area or place in circuit around walking tracks. Works to be carried out as part of play space project if funded.	High	Unknown	Council	Provide additional space for play space. Create defined children's play area vs adult.	Committee	Council
20	Monitor car park usage and if increased demand is demonstrated, submit a budget request to Council to fund the increase in size to the 21 spaces originally proposed.	Medium	\$70,000	Council	Consolidate car parking for the park. Provide enough parking for visitors during peak use periods.	Council	Council
21	Install new seating or reflective spaces as required in agreed style ensuring a goal of consistent furniture throughout the park.	Medium	\$800 each (Dependent on type)	N/A	Designation of quiet space or resting areas around park.	Committee	tbd
22	Install and maintain nest boxes - seek donations or support from woodworking groups or Men's Shed.	Medium	\$100 each (Dependent on type)	LVFN	Provide additional nesting/breeding sites for native fauna.	Committee	Donations
23	Investigate funding opportunities through State and Federal Government to support initiatives for the conservation and improvement of significant species and vegetation communities.	Medium	Nil	Council DELWP	Resources to implement appropriate management of environmentally significant areas of the park.	Committee	DELWP WGCMA
24	Continue to revegetate along Eel Hole Creek and the eastern edge of Lake Hyland using species from the Swamp Scrub EVC.	Medium	\$3.50 per plant	WGCMA Council	Decrease erosion of Lake edge. Improve water quality within the Lake. Improve habitat diversity and improve habitat linkages.	Committee	Council WGCMA Landcare

Development							
No.	Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost (\$)	Approvals or Consultation Required	Benefit	Responsibility for Implementation	Potential Funding Source
25	Investigate re-branding Mathison Park, having consistent signage, furniture and online presence that builds on the natural features the park has to offer.	Medium	Unknown	Council	Continue to provide educational experiences for park users.	Committee	Council
26	Develop way finding signage to indicate distance and location of points of interest in the park.	Medium	\$15.00 (each per 100)	N/A	Provide information to park users.	Committee	VicHealth Council
27	Request Ausnet Services re-locate the power pole in the middle of the old carpark off Mackeys Road.	Low	Unknown	AusNet Services	Remove cause of numerous small accidents at the park. Accommodate larger vehicles in car park.	Council	tbd
28	Continue to develop arboretum signage.	Low	\$15.00 (each per 100)	N/A	Improve education potential of this park feature.	Committee	Landcare
29	Seek funding to build on the farming history of the area through the installation of post and rail fencing and additional orchard plantings around the old homestead.	Low	tbd	Council	Increase usage of the area and appreciation for the history of the park.	Committee	Local History Grants
30	Retain former dam in eastern Open Parkland.	Low	Unknown	Council	Rehabilitate the former dam.	Committee	Council
31	Investigate suitable Heritage funding to support the continued maintenance and management of the Homestead	Low	\$100,000	Council	Manage a key park attraction to ensure it remains in a manageable condition	Committee	External Heritage funding sources

Activation							
No.	Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost (\$)	Approvals or Consultation Required	Benefit	Responsibility for Implementation	Potential Funding Source
32	Improve and keep the park's website up to date. Investigate social media training or support from local educational organisations.	High	Nil	Council	Maintain an online presence to raise awareness of the park as a regional attraction.	Committee Council	N/A
33	Support and encourage local groups and organisations to assist with revegetation, wildlife monitoring, maintenance and educational uses of the park.	High	Nil	Nil	Increase community participation and ownership of the park.	Committee	N/A
34	By 2020 develop a plan for the parks to be activated by significant local and regional events such as festivals, markets and music.	High	Nil	Council	Provide a possible source of funding. Increase and promote awareness of the park. Increase community involvement in the park.	Committee Council	N/A
35	Investigate event management training and/or support for the Committee to assist them with the development of the event plan as above.	High	Nil	Council	Increase and promote activation of the park. Provide possible funding source. Provides regional level events attraction.	Committee Council	N/A
36	Encourage groups such as Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists to survey fauna at the park and provide reports to committee	Medium	Nil	Nil	Improve the knowledge of fauna found within the park. Provide information for inclusion on the website or information shelters.	Committee	N/A
37	Investigate the registering of the arboretum collection with the Australian National Botanic Gardens.	Medium	Nil	Botanic Gardens	Increase the importance of the collection to the region.	Committee	N/A
38	Continue to develop the indigenous plantings in the Koori garden and surrounding the farm dam through weed control, additional plantings and plant signage to link to interpretive board.	Medium	\$3.50 per plant \$15.00 (each per 100)	GunaiKurnai	Increase awareness and significance of the plantings. Provide a stronger link with interpretive signage.	Committee	Council GunaiKurnai
39	Contact WGCMA and request re-activation of Water watch at the park.	Medium	Nil	WGCMA	Alleviate community concerns regarding the quality of water in Lake Hyland.	Committee	N/A



**Recreation**

- 1 Upgrade existing play space to a regional level play space as per design.
- 2 Investigate relocation of exercise equipment.
- 3 Monitor car park usage and request additional funding to extend if required.
- 4 Undertake arborist inspections yearly where areas are affected by human traffic.
- 5 Maintain all lake viewing platforms to ensure continued use for recreation and conservation purposes.
- 6 Maintain and increase track network as per prioritised list.
- 7 Install new seating as needs identified for reflective spaces or rest areas.

**Conservation**

- 8 Revegetate as part of 20 million trees project (funding received).
- 9 Protect remnant native vegetation and significant Strzelecki Gum habitat through weed control, exclusion from grazing; retain all standing trees and woody debris.
- 10 Manage Edison Mission revegetation plantings as a conservation area through weed control, exclusion from slashing; retain all standing trees and woody debris. Supplementary plant understorey species particularly on Eel Hole Creek.
- 11 Remove willows from Dam and revegetate with species from the Swamp Scrub Ecological Vegetation Class.
- 12 Ensure protection of significant remnant by preventing slashing and or soil disturbance.
- 13 Improve Lake Hyland environment through weed control around perimeter and revegetation of Lake edge to thicken existing plantings.
- 14 Improve Eel Hole Creek environment through weed control, retain all standing trees and woody debris and revegetate understorey species along banks.

**Education**

- 15 Undertake yearly assessment of Hare Homestead to determine maintenance requirements. Investigate funding to further develop farming history of site.
- 16 Continue to develop Koori plantings.
- 17 Assess signage of arboretum and upgrade as required.
- 18 Continue to place up to date information in park entrance shelters.

**Open Parkland**

- 19 Continue to develop conifer plantings.
- 20 Continue to develop Deciduous/Evergreen tree plantings.
- 21 Continue to develop native plantings along Tramway Road.
- 22 Retain dam in eastern open parkland.
- 23 Maintain current slashing regime for fire prevention and aesthetic purposes. Continue to develop themed plantings and investigate use of area for festivals, events, etc.
- 24 Remove former farm fencing to create large unimpeded areas without physical barriers to park users.
- 25 Maintain current slashing regime and remove woody debris as per the Fire Management Plan.

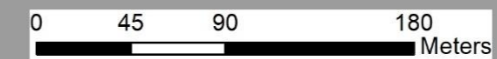
**Legend**

- Existing Track
- Proposed Track
- Mgmt Zone Boundaries
- Water Bodies
- Play Space

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



Map 1 - Mathison Park, Mackeys Road, Churchill Management Plan



Title: Mathison Park Management Plan  
 Reference: 17128LCC  
 Drafted by: T. Brooker (02/07/2018)  
 Version: Final for publication  
 Datum: GDA 1994 VICGRID94



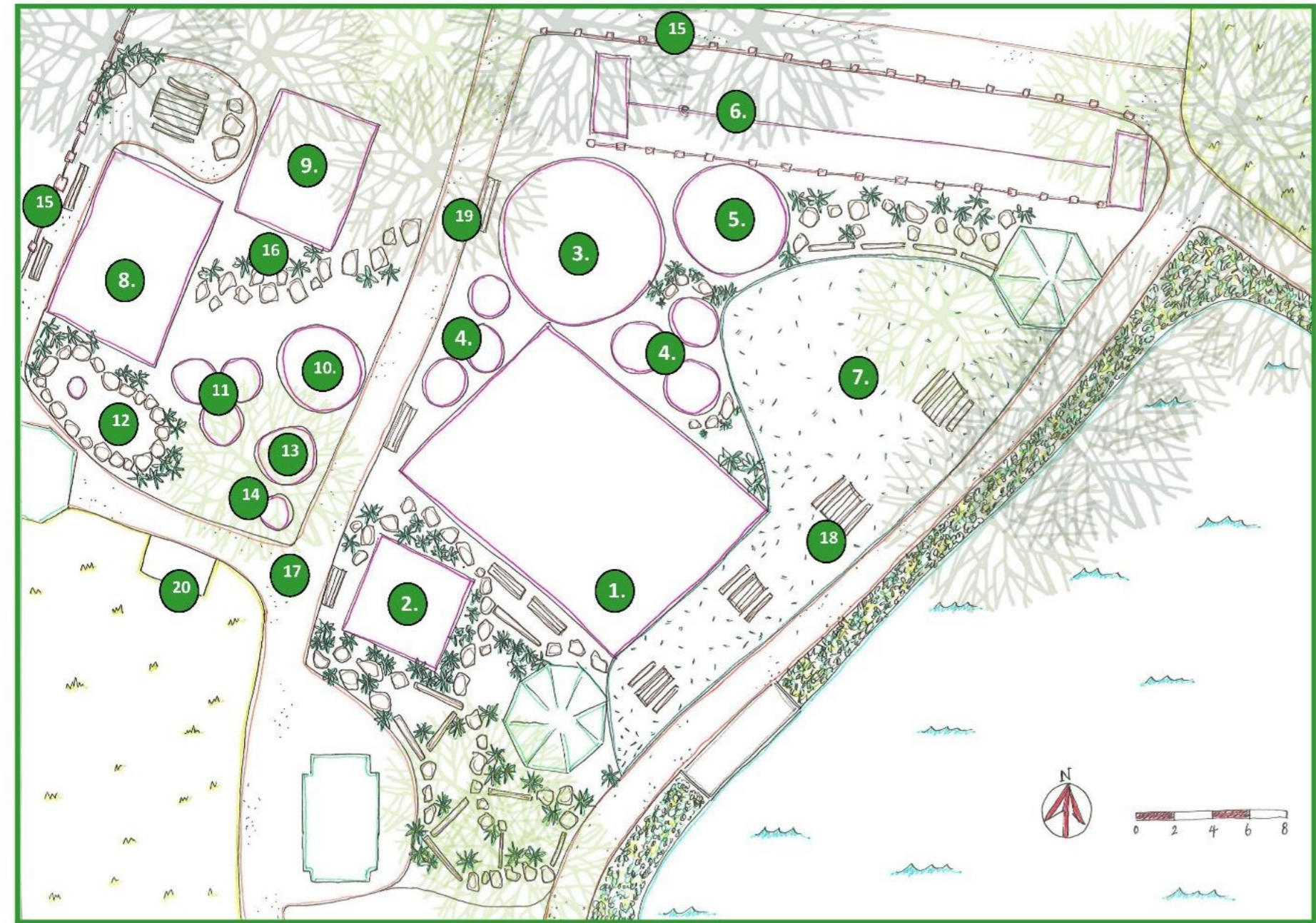
# Play Space Design

## Mathison Park Play Space

A regional, nature based adventure park with play attractions for all ages alongside Lake Hyland in Churchill.  
This play space boasts an array of experiences and is supported by toilet and BBQ facilities and meandering walking tracks







## Mathison Park Play Space

- ELEMENT**
- 1 Tree House
  - 2 Big Timber Triple Swing
  - 3 Pendulum Timber Post Swing
  - 4 Timber Sculptures - Local Fauna
  - 5 Multi Spinner
  - 6 Big Timber Flying Fox
  - 7 Artificial Turf Picnic Area
  - 8 Kondadilla
  - 9 Big Timber Triple Swing
  - 10 4 Way Rocker
  - 11 Frog, Spider & Bee Rockers
  - 12 Sandpit and Turtle Table
  - 13 Piper
  - 14 Jungle Drum
  - 15 Post and Rail Fencing
  - 16 Talking Flowers
  - 17 Path Renewal and Clean Up
  - 18 Picnic Tables
  - 19 Bench Seats
  - 20 Info Shelter



Equipment Total Cost	\$ 223,779.00
Rubber Total Cost	\$ 335,316.60
Landscape Elements Total Cost	\$ 151,105.00
Contingency (10%)	\$ 71,020.06
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$ 781,220.66</b>

