



Clean Air and
Urban Landscapes
Hub

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Residents' perceptions and use of Sheils Reserve pre-greening

A social science study for Moreland City Council
Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub

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About the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub

The Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub (CAUL) is a consortium of four universities: the University of Melbourne, RMIT University, the University of Western Australia and the University of Wollongong. The CAUL Hub is funded by the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program. The task of the CAUL Hub is to undertake research to support environmental quality in our urban areas, especially in the areas of air quality, urban greening, liveability and biodiversity, and with a focus on applying research to develop practical solutions.

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Summary

- Interview-based research was undertaken with Moreland residents living near Sheils Reserve in Brunswick West prior to its transformation from an informal greenspace into an urban park. Nineteen residents were interviewed between March and August 2019.
- The aim was to understand resident expectations of the transformation and how the improved greenspace may impact their perceptions and uses of both the Reserve and surrounding greenspaces.
- Moonee Ponds Creek was included due to its proximity to Sheils Reserve and because naturalisation works are planned for the adjoining parkland.
- Moonee Ponds Creek was generally viewed favourably and was widely used by most residents for general walking, dog walking, and bike riding. Positive perceptions were associated with running water and the linear shape which was effective as a commuter trail.
- Negative perceptions included concerns about safety due to the speed of cyclists and the narrow paths, an absence of lighting and overall poor maintenance.
- Sheils Reserve was viewed more negatively than Moonee Ponds Creek by residents.
- Primary concerns about Sheils Reserve were that it was uncared for, unattractive, lacked facilities and was a 'non-destination'.
- Sheils Reserve was primarily used for dog walking or as a shortcut on journeys through the neighbourhood.
- Although historically residents reported using Sheils Reserve as greenspace, its use as a place of leisure and enjoyment were limited before the greening improvements.
- Residents were excited about the improvements and hoped that it would create a sense of community, increase access to nature and biodiversity, provide amenities to support equitable access, and create a place that is an enjoyable destination.
- There were concerns from a few residents about the design of the improvements being overly formal and that maintenance would not be sufficient.
- When asked about uses and perceptions of other local greenspaces, the most popular nearby reserve mentioned was Dunstan Reserve. Residents used Dunstan Reserve to walk dogs, for physical activity, and they enjoyed the shade provided by large trees and the community gardens.
- Jacobs Reserve and Queens Park were also highlighted by residents as greenspaces they perceived positively, and made use of, because of the children's playground and large trees (Jacobs Reserve) and they enjoyed the water feature of the lake (Queens Park).
- The variety of needs and preferences reported means each greenspace plays an important role in a neighbourhood network of open space.
- There is significant potential for Sheils Reserve to be provide additional greenspace for residents and the local community.
- The follow-up research after the proposed greening transformation will investigate how resident perceptions and uses of Sheils Reserve have changed.

Introduction

This report presents the 'pre-greening' findings for Sheils Reserve in Brunswick West for Moreland City Council. It provides an overview of how residents living close to Sheils Reserve perceived and used the Reserve and nearby Moonee Ponds Creek before the greening improvements were undertaken. These findings will be compared with the outcomes from post-greening works' interviews to be conducted after planned improvements have been implemented at the Reserve. Although Sheils Reserve was the main focus of the park renewal, the questions were broadened out to include Moonee Ponds Creek because naturalisation works are also planned for the adjoining parkland along the Creek. The aim of the pre- and post- qualitative design is to understand how the new, improved greenspace will impact local residents' perceptions and uses of the Reserve and surrounding areas, and includes outcomes relating to connection with place or nature, and health and wellbeing.

The report draws on 16 interviews with 19 participants (three interviews involved couples) conducted between March and August 2019. Participants are split evenly between male (nine) and female (ten) and represent a broad range of age groups from under 25 to over 75. Of the 19 participants, five were born overseas, including Spain, Macedonia, Sri Lanka and the UK. One participant identifies as Aboriginal Australian, and one participant has a young child (under 12 years) who lives with them. Six participants are retired (one since deceased) and 13 are employed (including two who are also studying).

The report is structured as follows. For Moonee Ponds Creek and Sheils Reserve respectively, we show:

- How residents described the area – the words they used and what these imply
- What residents liked and disliked about the area
- How the area is used before the greening improvements.

For Sheils Reserve, we also summarise how people felt about the planned transformation, including their hopes and concerns. For comparison, we provide a brief outline of other nearby parks and reserves that residents used and their main functions.

Moonee Ponds Creek

Moonee Ponds Creek was described as a "much-neglected creek" (Paul) and also as a "wasting space" (Aaron) in need of being "re-naturalised" (Bob). This was primarily a response to the material presence of the "concrete space" (Jane), which was perceived, contrary to its title, as a 'creek'. For Bob "there's not many creeks that you can say, well there's concrete, and that's about it". Bob perceived it rather as "a bloody drain" and specifically "not nature".

Despite these descriptions based on the accounts of four residents, a larger number of residents had more positive associations with the Creek. The grasslands reserve and remnant bushland areas were particularly noted by three households (Teresa; Paul; Joe and Karen), who found it "exciting" (Paul)

and felt the planting has “done wonders” to the area (Karen). Other residents enjoyed the dynamic nature of the water flowing through the Creek. As Jane explained, “the water is always different levels on different days” and it “shows you its different faces, and character”. It is when the level is high, and the water rushing, that John finds it especially enjoyable. Paul agreed, finding it “exciting to go up there when it’s really flowing a lot”.

Residents noted certain features of the Moonee Ponds Creek that indicated its perception as a rather unique place within the city. For Paul, the way the tree branches droop and “sweep to the ground in a certain way” was one of the things that is “special about Moonee Ponds Creek”. It was also regarded as a quiet and interesting place – a place where he can find “some alone time...away from the cars”; a “peaceful” alternative for Peter to walking on a road; and for Jane it provided the “peace and quiet” that lets her “disconnect from...work” – something Paul also appreciated was his daily commute home by bike along the Creek which he found “relaxing” and “stress relieving”.

Along with these positive associations with Moonee Ponds Creek, there were also some that were more negative. Chief among these was a perceived lack of safety. For seven residents, the isolated nature of the Creek and a lack of lighting contributed to a safety risk. For Lisa, the Creek was “a bit lonely” and “doesn’t feel safe”, while Natasha highlighted what she referred to as “that ‘woman walking by herself’ thing” whereby “you instantly kind of turn around and see who else is on the track”. Kyle also noted that “being a male”, he felt safer because he could protect himself. Graffiti (and those who do it) was construed by three residents as a signal of danger (Lisa), or at least concern (John), contributing to certain parts of the Creek being associated with “anti-social behaviour” (Peter) which is identified as causing “a very unsettling feeling” (Peter). Conversely, John took a different view of graffiti and those who do it, explaining that “some people does good things” [sic] and he felt regret when the graffiti that “really make[s] a difference” and that he “love[s] so much” was removed.

Cycling along the Creek was perceived to present risks both to cyclists and other pedestrians. Mary used to commute to and from work by bike along the Creek, but she found it especially unsafe during winter because the Creek “wasn’t well lit”. Similarly, Natasha, whose son sometimes cycled along the Creek, recalls how dark he found it one evening. As she remembers it, her son said, “that was creepy as hell” and “dodgy” and he decided to never do it again. Natasha further noted the sense of isolation along the Creek track, where “you can’t get out. Once you’re there, that’s it...there’s a wall and a Creek”. For Aaron and Lily, it was cyclists that posed a danger to pedestrians. Cyclists can travel at high speeds along the track, and as an older person, this made Aaron nervous with the risk of a collision because “I don’t heal as well as I did”. Cyclists were perceived to appear suddenly around blind corners necessitating vigilance from pedestrians and dog walkers (Lily).

General littering along the Creek was highlighted by two residents. However, these same residents also actively participated in cleaning up the Creek voluntarily, describing it as a “kind of nice multi-exercise activity” (Paul) and making use of bags provided by Cleanup Australia which we “carry in our pockets” (John). Paul explained, “when you take care of some land, it’s almost like you’re taking ownership of it a little bit”. Only one resident mentioned the presence of larger rubbish items along the Creek (Joe). Further negative observations made about the Creek, noted by between two and three residents each, included a lack of facilities, such as seating and bins; general maintenance,

including better/wider pathways; and accessibility, particularly in relation to the steep slopes to and from the Creek.

Despite the perceived risks that the Creek posed for some residents, plus other disadvantages or dislikes as noted above, it was widely used by the majority of residents interviewed for general walking, dog walking, and bike riding. As Janet remarked, “we do use Moonee Ponds Creek a lot”. Of the interviewed residents, six regularly walked along different lengths of the Creek during the day or at weekends, with Karen describing it as “a nice little walk”. One of these residents, plus a further four, additionally used it for regular dog walks, mentioning particularly how their dogs love to go into the water. Cycling to work, and/or for leisure and visiting friends was another aspect of the Creek that was enjoyed by three residents.

Sheils Reserve

Compared with Moonee Ponds Creek, a larger number of interviewed residents had negative perceptions of Sheils Reserve pre-greening (Figure 1) – 11 in total. It was variously regarded as “a wasteland” (Bob), “an empty lot” (Lisa), “a vacant block” (Peter; Janet), and more wistfully as “a sad place” (Aaron; John). A perceived lack of human care for the Reserve underpinned the views of other residents who described it as “quite neglected” (Mary), “untidy” and “unloved” (Natasha) and “pretty barren” (Kyle). However, the view from Sheils Reserve was something that seven residents particularly appreciated. For Teresa, “facing west...getting a big sky view and getting sunsets” is “the best part” of the Reserve. Paul agreed, noting how in the evening, when the sun sets, “it’s actually quite beautiful”, while Mary described it as “really remarkable”. Like Teresa, Mary also thought it was “the nicest thing about that park”.



Figure 1 Sheils Reserve pre-greening

Indeed, the fact that the Reserve is unlikely to be developed in the future was “a huge selling point” for Mary and her partner when buying their adjacent home. Highlighting the value of open space in built up areas, Paul went on to remark how important it is to have “those little breathing space[s],

little pockets around the suburbs”, and Bob similarly values it as “the closest place that I could see different varieties of trees...the smell of a tree, you know?”.

Local residents’ negative perceptions of Sheils Reserve were more numerous and also more varied than for the Creek. The primary objection related to its perceived unattractiveness, basically “just a bench and just some grass” as Lisa described it, and “a strip of green” according to Teresa that “looks hideous” (Mary) and “ugly” (Janet). Linking to concerns around a lack of maintenance, many comments emphasised how dry the Reserve is. John reported, it is “so dry most of the time”; Janet described it as “pretty dead looking”; and as Sarah explained, “the grass looks like it’s been baked in the grill...it’s so brown and brittle”. Peter conveyed the prevailing view of the Reserve as “literally dead grass”. The condition of the grass was directly related to the Reserve’s lack of use, with Karen describing it as a place “you would never come, it’s not a destination”, and similarly, for Teresa, “never...a place that you would go to”. Jane reflected that “maybe if it was nicer, I would go there”.

Contributing to these perceptions of the Reserve as a non-destination was a lack of facilities. The absence of seating was a problem noted by several residents (Teresa; Mary) and particularly for those who are older and “need to be able to sit down every few minutes” (Bob). Joe, a nurse, highlighted the importance of having “enough seating at good spaces” for older people and those with heart problems, and also for parents to be able to “sit here and watch their kids”. When one resident requested Moreland City Council add seating in 2017, a bench and a picnic table were provided (Figure 2). Residents have since noted an increase in social activity as people sit there to have lunch, and “make an opportunity to talk with someone else” (John). However, as it currently existed at the time of the interviews, the park had no dedicated facilities to “really engage the children” (Jane) or adults (Lily), and the absence of fencing raised safety concerns for one resident (Jack) in relation to a previous car accident nearby.



Figure 2 Bench and picnic table provided by the local council

Even for activities that do not require dedicated facilities, especially ball games, the slope of the Reserve presented difficulties for several residents (John; Jane). As Kyle explained, “I wouldn’t say ‘Let’s go play footy at Sheils Reserve’ because you’d roll down the hill”, while for John, an older resident, the slope is so steep that he finds it “dangerous to climb”. Apart from the slope, overall

accessibility of the Reserve was adversely impacted by a lack of access points and formal pathways. Mary described having to “kind of jump over the retaining wall” to join “self-made tracks through the dirt”, while Joe noted the lack of paths and the fact that in winter “you had to put [on] your gumboots” before coming to the Reserve. In summer, a lack of shade made the Reserve additionally uninviting (John).

Much of the negativity surrounding Sheils Reserve was related to the lack of general maintenance. Two interviewees mentioned a sexual assault had occurred in the park which impacted their perceptions of safety (Bob and Mary). As a response, council reportedly removed most of the understorey vegetation to improve visibility. Teresa described the Reserve as “neglected and quite weedy” and John referred more than once to its “huge weeds”. Mary remarked on a lack of upkeep to the retaining wall, which as a result, “was falling down and the dirt was washing down into the waterway” during rain events. There was a further perception that when maintenance did take place in the Reserve, it was tokenistic and half-hearted. Teresa said she would see “a little mulch being thrown around near the trees, but that was about it”. And Joe found it “really disappointing” when he learned that the Reserve is serviced by a water meter. He explains that “all the years when this was such a dust bowl...they never bothered to put something in” – referring to an irrigation system.

Compounding the lack of facilities and maintenance at Sheils Reserve was the absence of rubbish bins (Bob) and the perception that it “has been used as a rubbish tip for some time” (Mary). As Mary explained, “people end up piling stuff on top of other stuff”, particularly in one corner of the Reserve as highlighted also by Teresa and John.

Together, these observations by residents contributed to an overall view of Sheils Reserve as “just unloved” (Natasha). Aaron found it a “sad thing” that “nothing has changed” and “no one’s done anything with it”. Even when residents themselves have made an effort to green the area, Karen notes that most of the plants were stolen within a week or two, making it “an interesting exercise in futility”. However, one resident was actively involved in maintaining the Reserve as part of a voluntary group and enjoyed seeing the community spirit that can attract up to seven people to the park on a nice day, while Bob maintained that for those who are patient, the Reserve had some pleasures to offer. As he explains, “there actually is a bit of wildlife. You just got to have five minutes to sit here and look at it”.

As noted previously, Bob was an older resident who particularly valued being in nature and had limited capacity to access other greenspace. This may have contributed to his more positive perception of the Reserve, despite the limitations perceived by most residents. For the remaining interviewed residents, Sheils Reserve was most commonly noted as a place for dog walking (Bob; Aaron; John; Peter; Karen and Joe), and then as a shortcut, “through to Brunswick or Coburg” (Kyle), to “the bus on the other side” (Lily), the Creek (Teresa), or simply on the way to “somewhere else” (Mary).

Apart from dog walking, interviewees described leisurely uses of the Reserve as mostly historical activities. Aaron says he used to play on the reserve “back in the mid-50s” and since then, “nothing is done to develop that”. Similarly, John and Joe used to play soccer on the Reserve with their sons, and Lily remembers being there every day with his brother, “learning to “kick the footy” when they were both young. This finding may be a result of the demographics of our study cohort, particularly

as Mary remarked that “people still go [to the Reserve] with their kids, on the weekends”. However, it is notable that unlike Moonee Ponds Creek, local residents’ positive associations with the Reserve were mostly related to its *potential* as a greenspace, and particularly the future improvements planned by Moreland City Council. This suggests that its use as a place of leisure and enjoyment were limited before the greening transformation.

Discussing the planned greening improvements

Most residents found the prospect of the Sheils Reserve greening improvements “really”, “so” or “very exciting” (Joe; Janet; Lily), and “can’t wait for it to happen” (Paul). Hoped-for outcomes of the plan that are highlighted include the creation of sense of community, increased access to nature and biodiversity, amenities for equitable access, and the creation of a place that is overall interesting and enjoyable. These are addressed in turn in each of the following four paragraphs.

Bob hoped that the Reserve will, over time, become “a meeting spot for people” and provide “room for children to get a bit wet and dirty”. Joe similarly considered the Reserve as potentially “a good meeting spot” as it provides a “neutral ground” where people can gather over a community barbecue. Both Joe and Alan noted the connection between community activities and socialisation, with Joe highlighting that community connection takes time and is built on “actually doing something” with each other – “the more you walk, you talk”. In their desire for greater community interaction, residents recognised the diversity of needs that ought to be catered for – a common area for relaxing (Mary) as a well as a “really nice” place for people with children (Lily). As Paul explained, the vision is for “people with kids, people with dogs...they’ll all go to the park, and maybe they’ll form connections in the community, and there’ll be more...community pride” (Paul). Describing the transformation of the Reserve in terms of its benefits to the community, Mary says “how wonderful it could be. Everyone will enjoy it”. Importantly, Bob further reflected on the value of greenspaces for people at different and sometimes challenging points in their lives when “they need somewhere to go quiet and where you can actually see a tree”.

For Alan, part of making the Reserve “a bit more welcoming” was making it greener. Once the planting progresses, Teresa hoped that the increased diversity of plants will attract more birds, and as Natasha remarks, “if I was starting to see more bird life around, I would be across there having a sticky beak”. Several residents especially highlighted the planned water feature (Paul; Bob) and Aaron was “really looking forward” to the sorts of bird and animal life it will attract. John was anticipating the pleasure of listening to the water “cascade from pieces of stone” and emphasised that “it’s the noise of the water” that makes the difference - “you can sit around there and listen”. Residents were additionally looking forward to “a bit of fresh air with extra trees and nice birds singing to us” (Margaret), to the herb garden and frogs in the pond (Bob), viewing platforms and plantings (Paul), shady trees (John) and “nature stuff” more generally (Lily). For Jane, the greening improvements at Sheils Reserve were going to be “an amazing addition to nature in Brunswick”.

The planned amenities at Sheils Reserve are considered an essential aspect of the development, assisting both in building community and allowing more people to enjoy the benefits of being in nature. In an area where many people live in apartments, the children’s’ playground was considered especially important for families with children (Paul; Lily), and also for those with visiting nieces,

nephews, and grandchildren (Janet; Teresa). Both Alan and Lisa, an elderly couple, and Paul, a young man, noted the benefits of the proposed fitness equipment and Teresa remarked that she will “definitely” be using it. Other aspects of the planned greening improvements such as improved pathways, slope improvements, and removal of the steep edge, were welcomed by residents and recognised as improving access “for a mixture of people...with prams, walking frames, or wheelchairs” (Teresa; also John).

Finally, residents variably expressed their hopes that Sheils Reserve will simply become a more enjoyable, interesting and attractive place to be. For Teresa, gardens and different kinds of greenspace are all part of “making our environment a more enjoyable place to live in”. Natasha thought the plan was “interesting” and “lovely”, and she was looking forward to the improved view from her house and walking through “that beautiful park” to get to the shops. John was pleased with the proposed seating, which will afford him a better view of the sunset than from his home, while Paul was happy that the plan “seems to have a lot of things in” and will provide a place with “Australian nature” that he can take his parents when they visit, “for a barbecue or something”.

Overwhelmingly, the prospect of a public space that encourages activity and community is highlighted in residents’ visions of the greening improvements. As Aaron illustrated, he wants “people using it...hearing voices...the voices of people having fun...that’s what I want to hear”, and as Jack said simply “green, trees, slides, BBQ, what more can you ask for?”. Overall, there is significant potential for Sheils Reserve to provide additional greenspace for these residents and the local community.

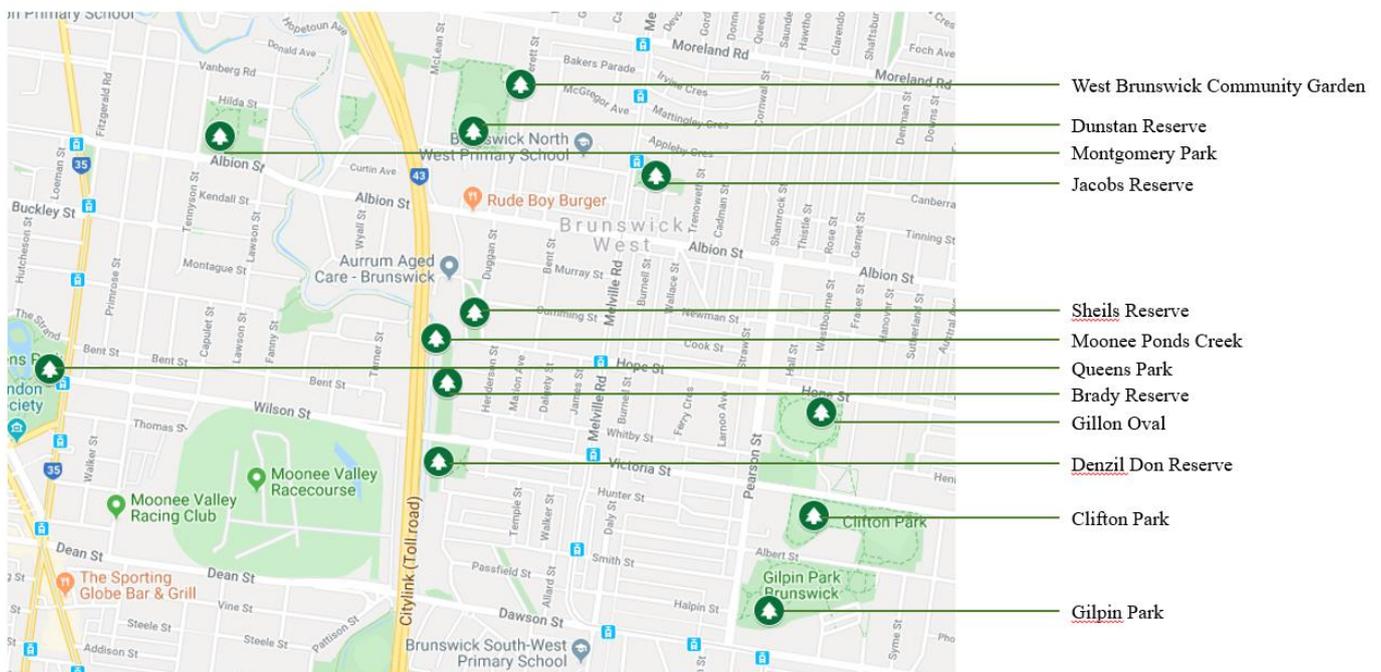
Other parks

The most popular nearby reserve mentioned by the residents interviewed was Dunstan Reserve, which is situated approximately 7 minutes’ walk from Sheils Reserve (Figure 3). Considerably larger than Sheils Reserve, residents were attracted to Dunstan Reserve for the views (Teresa), dog walking (Teresa; Bob), the oval for walking and running (Aaron; John; Janet), the shade provided by the trees (Sarah), and also the community gardens. Several participants were actively involved in the community gardens (Teresa; Janet; Sarah), while others enjoyed simply visiting (Mary; Paul).

For retired resident (Sarah), the gardens have enabled her to become more sociable and feel part of the community. As she explained, she was “almost non-conversational” when she first started attending the gardens, whereas “that isn’t the case anymore. They’re very welcoming”. Aaron, who is retired, simply enjoys the greenspace of Dunstan Reserve, particularly the “excellent path” for walking, and the opportunities it provides him to watch different sports, and also watch (as opposed to walk) dogs. He says, “It’s great watching the dogs...I really love watching them play...it’s uplifting to see them in the morning or see them at night. You actually feel happy when you come back from your walk” (Aaron). Interestingly, it is the distance of Dunstan Reserve from Sheils Reserve that is highlighted by Bob as providing a valued opportunity for social interaction. As he explains, “I don’t mind that [distance] much because...I stop and talk to lots and lots of people along the way”.

Jacobs Reserve is a similar size to Sheils Reserve and is also a relatively popular destination for the interviewed residents (Figure 3). Part of its attraction was the playground (Teresa; Kyle), which is described by Teresa as being “quite lovely”, although the equipment is noted by another resident as

being in need of an upgrade (Alan). However, in contrast to Sheils Reserve, it is the trees and greenery of Jacob’s Reserve that are a significant part of its attraction (Teresa; Mary; John; Joe and Karen). For example, Mary, describes it as “gorgeous, very lush with green grass”, while for John it is “the unique [sic] of the trees...one type of trees” that make it, for him, an “amazing park, completely different from the other ones”. The greenness of Jacobs Reserve made it stand out to Karen as a particularly “nice” reserve.



The third most frequently mentioned nearby greenspace was Queens Park, situated approximately 2km west of Sheils Reserve, across Moonee Ponds Creek and the Citylink Toll Road (Figure 3). For two residents, this park is noted for its lake, and also for its size. John explained that when he takes visiting friends to Queens Park, which he described as “really very nice”, his guests “feel they’re in a completely different place” and that it is “the water [that] is the difference”. Jack and Margaret described Queens Park as “beautiful....the best park I’ve seen” and explains, “it’s huge, that’s why”.

Figure 3 Other local parks near Sheils Reserve

Apart from these three parks – Dunstan Reserve, Jacobs Reserve and Queens Park – residents local to Sheils Reserve visited a wide variety of nearby parks for different reasons. For general walking, residents used Fraser Reserve (Alan and Lisa), Merri Creek (Natasha; Paul), Princes Park (Janet) and Royal Park (Paul) (Figure 3). Brady Park was a frequent destination for one resident with toddlers, for whom it is “part of our...regular excursions” (Jane). Montgomery Park holds several attractions for Janet including the playground, community garden, running track and the surrounding environment (Figure 3). As she explains, her husband enjoys running there, she is a member of the community garden, and the playground and picnic areas make it a good place for her to meet her brother with his kids. The fact that it also has “a few nice cafes next to it as well” was considered an added bonus.

Denzil Don (Kyle), Gillon Oval (Lily), Gilpin Park (Teresa; Lily), Brunswick Oval (Kyle) and Clifton Park were all noted dog walking destinations, though Kyle especially highlighted Clifton Park as being

“multi-purpose and everyone can use that” (Figure 3). Lily agrees - she used the track at Clifton Park for running but can let her dogs off lead at the same time, “let them go and watch them as I run around”. Darebin Parklands were appealing for a more informal nature experience. As Lily described, one rainy day walk with her dogs and partner, “[it] was awesome...it’s sort of like a little bit of a hike so when we went it was muddy and...it’s a bit of fun”. Having a larger dog, Teresa emphasised the importance of designated off-lead areas, such as at Gilpin Park, so that dogs of all sizes can be properly exercised and socialised. She remarks that the “enclosed area has increased the use of Gilpin Park a lot...made it a lot more user-friendly”.

However, for Lily the increased traffic at Gilpin Park has had the opposite effect. As she explained “it’s good for socialising but...I don’t spend too much time in there because...it can be very busy”. Lily also questioned the restrictions of lighting at Gilpin Park to just the pathways and the incomplete fencing – a decision that she reported has “confused” a few people at Gilpin. In contrast, the renovation of Gillon Oval is praised by Joe who said, “it’s so much nicer” and has been “the biggest thing” for the local community.

Concerns about the changes

The variety of needs and preferences associated with local greenspaces, as highlighted by our interviewed residents, indicates that no one place can meet them all. Indeed, a small number of residents are already slightly concerned or at least ambivalent about some of the proposed changes to Sheils Reserve. Peter thought that the planned transformation showed “a lot of ambition for such a small space” and is unsure if he will use the area more or not. Two residents shared misgivings about the formal design of the space. As Jane observed, “[playgrounds] are important but children have those everywhere, they have them indoors now”. She would rather see more opportunities for “nature learning’ with, for example, “rocks for climbing”. Sarah agreed, describing “the ready availability of swings and manicured parks in this borough”. She could see “absolutely no reason to duplicate that” and instead imagined that the Reserve was going to be a nature reserve whose “prime objective was birds, bees, and insects, and that it would even have a pond for frogs”. Relatedly, Kyle was concerned that the planned changes will require more maintenance than funding will cover, while Alan questioned short-term provisions for shade with respect to trees that “are going to take at least 20 years...”.

Next steps

Considering residents’ hopes and concerns for the transformation of Sheils Reserve, and their perceptions and uses of the area before the greening improvements had taken place, the second stage of the research will investigate how residents’ perceptions and uses of Sheils Reserve have changed. In combination with this report, our final report will address the project’s original research questions.