

The Final Stage of Cairnlea

Summary of community engagement findings
2020



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Development Victoria is leading the development of the final stage of Cairnlea, a 41ha site which sits along Cairnlea Drive and Ballarat Road, with the aim of creating a new residential neighbourhood.

In the 1990s, Development Victoria, then VicUrban, entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Department of Defence to acquire, remediate and progressively develop the original Albion Explosives site – which is now the suburb of Cairnlea. Most of the site, which comprises over 3,100 residential lots, a town-centre, substantial public open space and grassland reserves, has been developed over the past 15-20 years.

In 2019, Development Victoria commenced planning and design for the final stage of Cairnlea. Development Victoria's vision for the site is to:

Regenerate the site and implement forward-thinking, health and environmentally conscious initiatives to create an amenity-rich, residential estate with a diverse range of affordable housing options, set amongst a network of creatively designed open spaces and neighbourhood services.

In 2020, Development Victoria released an online survey to the local Cairnlea community to seek views and aspirations for the final stage of Cairnlea. The survey provided 31 questions associated with the area's public open spaces, recreational areas and the environment, the residential zone, transport and access, community services and facilities, and environmentally sustainable design.

A total of 168 people responded to the online survey. Along with the survey, 36 people emailed the project team and four calls were made to the 1800 hotline. The findings of the survey have helped inform the preliminary design of the final stage of Cairnlea and will help guide broader engagement during future project stages.

Snapshot of engagement findings

168 people took the survey.

85% of respondents were from the suburb of Cairnlea.

64% of respondents were 'overall happy' or 'somewhat happy' with the vision for the site.

THE COMMUNITY TOLD US THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE:



A DIVERSE COMMUNITY and culture, high quality design, a good mix of housing and open space, and easy access to major transport routes, shopping centres and the city.



A WELL-DESIGNED neighbourhood with public open spaces, economic opportunities, and a range of shops and services.



A DIVERSE RANGE of housing and land options for downsizers, upsizers, and first home buyers.



DESIGN ELEMENTS that reflect the local character.



PARKS AND OUTDOOR AREAS linked by shared paths, and including playgrounds, exercise areas, shelters, seating, barbecues, and public art.



A REDEVELOPED GATEWAY HILL to include paths, native planting, outdoor recreational areas, and signage exploring local history.



WALKING AND BIKE PATHS connecting the new neighbourhood with public transport to reduce traffic and parking congestion.



ACCESS TO RESTAURANTS, cafés and bars, as well as a wide range of retail options.



LOCAL SCHOOLS and access to community and health services.



SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES across the project, including solar panels, stormwater re-use, and the use of recycled materials.

Detailed summary findings

- The majority of respondents are either somewhat or very happy about the proposed new community. They suggest it will provide substantial opportunities for new home buyers, downsizers and upsizers to be close to family and friends.
- Respondents like the site's proximity to the freeway, the Western Ring Road, the city and major shopping centres, and other destinations via Ballarat Road. They like the diverse community and culture, overall space and design, the parks, gardens, walking and bike tracks, the tall established trees throughout the neighbourhood, and the balance of open spaces and housing.
- Respondents look forward to the benefits the new development could provide, including the additional infrastructure, assets, public open spaces, economic opportunities, commercial destinations and services the development will enable.
- Respondents have an aspirational view of Cairnlea, seeing it as a "jewel amongst affordable suburbs".
- Respondents want to see a well-planned suburb, and while many respondents want to see large blocks and single houses, others are excited about smaller, well-priced apartments or units.
- Overall, respondents were interested in the development's height, size and density; impacts to parking, traffic and congestion; the lack of effective public transport within Cairnlea and to the local train stations.
- While some are excited about the potential diverse make-up of the new community, others said they were concerned about investment buyers and associated renters who don't maintain properties, impact the community composition and local way of life, which may lead to an increase in local crime and impacts on safety and security.

- The vast majority of respondents suggested they would like three or four-bedroom dwellings. They suggested adequate off-street parking was essential, and suggested single-storey dwellings for older residents, and a diverse range of housing options and price point were important.
- Respondents generally liked the proposed \$440,000 to \$620,000 price point, however there was varied feedback on affordable housing. There was support for the opportunities it would provide for a range of buyers to enter the property market or upsize/downsize in the suburb, but some respondents said they were hesitant about investment purchases, short-term contracts, renters from low socio-economic backgrounds and associated impacts to property prices.
- Respondents suggested a wide range of options for the types of outdoor spaces and facilities they would like to see in the development. Suggestions included large parks or reserves with playgrounds for children, outdoor exercise areas with physical training equipment for adults, and rehabilitation equipment for the elderly as well as sheltered and solar-powered BBQs and fenced dog parks. Respondents also suggested indoor and outdoor sporting facilities including tennis courts, football field/s, hockey courts, a BMX track, a skate park and more. There is also significant enthusiasm for parks with seating, trees and shelter as well as areas where families can gather for social events.
- Respondents offered similar suggestions for Gateway Hill as those provided above for other outdoor spaces on the site, as well as adequate parking and paths to and from the community, feature lighting and the windsocks preserved. Respondents would like Gateway Hill properly remediated and proposed a range of ideas for landscaping. Suggestions included a mountain bike trail, a space for flying kites, a giant slide, an outdoor entertainment area, an amphitheatre and more.
- From an overall perspective, respondents generally expressed a preference for native bushland and flora, and an Australian aesthetic that mirrors the current environment.
- Respondents have high expectations for a new grand welcome entrance at the corner of Cairnlea Drive and Ballarat Road. This is echoed across multiple responses throughout the survey.
- Respondents said there were substantial gaps in the local public transport system, including infrequent bus services, confusion about bus/train connections and the inability to access a train station on foot. Other respondents suggested there was inadequate parking at train stations, a lack of reliable real-time service updates, and that not all destinations have a viable public transport option.
- Respondents like the current walking/bike paths and tracks, and want to see these expanded throughout the suburb, connecting public open spaces and other community spaces, parklands, and public transport options. They think these should be lit up at night to encourage people to walk and be active, promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- Some respondents were interested about the impact of additional cars on parking, traffic, and congestion in the immediate vicinity of the access point on Cairnlea Drive, as well as the surrounding roads, including Furlong Road, Ballarat Road and the freeways. Respondents do not believe the existing road network will be able to manage increased road traffic and would like to see wider streets with two lanes, particularly along Cairnlea Drive.

- Respondents would like to see multiple entry points to the site (potentially Dunbarrim Avenue or Gurnung Drive), and well-thought-out access to and from the main roads.
- Overall, “high quality” places of entertainment were desired, including a restaurant strip with cafés, bars, a brewery/cafe, a cinema (or drive-in), drive-through food, and a late-night community.
- Some respondents want smaller shops such as a greengrocer, doctor, chemist, hairdresser, an Arabic fruit and Halal meat shop, a petrol station, a business hub, a law firm or light industrial workshop/s, while others want a larger shopping centre or mall with a Kmart, Costco, Coles, or a Homemaker Centre. From a commercial perspective, quality products and produce were preferred.
- Respondents pointed to the need for a primary and secondary school to meet the growing needs of the neighbourhood, and a dedicated community hub, providing maternal, child, allied health and youth services, mental health, drug and other counselling, job assistance, cultural facilities and a library. Other respondents want a Neighbourhood House, an aged care facility, a catholic church, a police station and more community events. It is noted that Development Victoria is not responsible for the identification and construction of new schools however the feedback received on this topic will be shared with the Department of Education.
- Respondents support the concept of environmentally sustainable design and want to see solar panels on outdoor buildings and stormwater capture and irrigation for open parklands, followed by recycled materials in roads and pavements. They want to see solar-powered streetlights along roads, in open spaces and parks, electric vehicle charging points, and a range of recycling and repurposing options.