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| Yarra Valley Water Tank Site Ivanhoe  Community Engagement Summary Report  24/05/2017 |

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# Preface

**Development Victoria** aims to create a sense of place and prosperity through development, urban renewal and community connection.

Development Victoria is a new organisation that combines the expertise and capabilities of Development Victoria and Major Projects Victoria to create and deliver economic and social value to Victoria.

Development Victoria formally operated from 1 April 2017 as a statutory authority, reporting to a Board.

Development Victoria will deliver property and precinct development projects to meet government’s policy objectives and apply its experience and expertise to the delivery of civic projects that enhance our state.

Development Victoria staff are skilled in realising opportunities and managing risks to develop publicly owned land and deliver complex projects.

Some of Development Victoria’s current projects include the revitalisation of central Dandenong, the Ballarat West Employment Zone, and the ongoing development of Docklands. It also oversees important civic projects such as the State Library, Flinders Street Station and Melbourne Park redevelopments. Projects in the pipeline include renewal of the Arden and Fishermans Bend precincts.

# Summary

Development Victoria (then Places Victoria) undertook two phases of community and stakeholder engagement to support development of the disused Yarra Valley Water tank site at 421 Upper Heidelberg Road Ivanhoe. The 7,336m2 site, near the corner of Bell Street, is surplus to the Yarra Valley Water’s operational needs and has not been in use since 2004.

Yarra Valley Water is exploring alternative uses for the site, with Development Victoria. The organisation is required to obtain the highest and best use for the site. Development Victoria’s due diligence activities indicate the site is well suited to residential and open space use.

The first phase of engagement, between 24 August and 20 September 2016, sought to inform stakeholders and the community about Places Victoria, the proposed development, the master plan process, opportunities associated with the provision and use of public open space, and provide a diverse range of opportunities for people to join the conversation to tell us what they think.

The second phase of engagement, between 14 March and 28 April 2017, presented the draft master plan for people’s consideration and provided opportunities for people to, once again, tell us what they think. During this phase, Places Victoria sought to understand the community’s level of satisfaction with how feedback provided during Phase 1 had been translated into the draft design.

Feedback from both phases of the engagement was considered by Development Victoria prior to submitting a final design for planning approval.

# Phase 1

The first phase of engagement, between 24 August and 20 September 2016, introduced Places Victoria and the project. Information included the intention to develop the site, the master plan process, opportunities associated with the proposal, including the potential to increase the quantum of public open space and the assets required to make this space usable, and the range of opportunities people had to engage with the project.

## Objectives

Key objectives of the engagement program were to:

* Educate stakeholders and the community about the project
* Provide a diverse range of opportunities for the community to provide feedback
* Understand reactions and implications or consequences of the proposal
* Meet the needs of the local community and improve the quality of the master plan
* Enhance Places Victoria's reputation and create support among key stakeholders for its licence to operate.

Information provided to the community focussed on how the site might be used and contrasted current and proposed usage.

## Engagement Activities

Engagement activities were designed to offer a range of opportunities to community members and project stakeholders and included:

* Stakeholder briefing sessions
* Dedicated project email and webpages
* 2 x community workshops
* 2 x pop-up information sessions
* Letterbox drop and local door knock
* Digital engagement platform
* Suite of communication materials including fact sheets, letters, emails, media and social media posts.

## Participation

A total of 64 people provided feedback, including 32 participants at two community workshops, six people during a door knock, 12 people at two pop-up information sessions and 10 people left their feedback on the project’s digital engagement platform.

## Feedback

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the draft design principles, their key concerns, the intangible values that should be considered within the master plan and their feedback on the public open space, such as current and future use, furniture and assets, landscape and plantings, paths and access. The draft design principles include:

* Provide public open space that is bigger and better equipped for the use of the entire community
* Seek to deliver a landscape outcome that both retains trees where possible and creates an integrated landscape between the park and the future development
* Deliver a design that considers the issue of overlooking neighbouring properties
* Deliver a design that maximises the capture and reuse of storm water
* Adopt an environmentally sustainable design framework (model to be agreed)
* Ensure the development does not increase traffic in local streets
* Deliver a design that is attractive, innovative and adds value to the local neighbourhood
* Deliver a design that offers more diverse housing options with a range of price-points to provide options for the community.

## Key issues and concerns

Key issues and concerns raised by the community regarding the proposed development include:

* Overshadowing and loss of sunlight to adjacent properties
* Overlooking and associated loss of privacy for adjacent properties
* Height, density and the impact on the area’s amenity and neighbourhood character
* Access and traffic impacts on local streets
* Parking impacts on local streets
* The growing need for improved public open space in the area
* Loss of trees and habitat on site
* Cumulative impacts of this and other developments in the local area.
* The design reflecting the needs and aspirations of both current and future residents

Key themes the community felt should be incorporated in the master plan were the need to reflect the area’s rich history, heritage and amenity, a desire for comfortable meeting spaces and well considered landscape design, improved connectivity and accessibility with surrounding areas, and the need for a sustainable community outcome. Themes were consistent with those outlined in the design principles for the site.

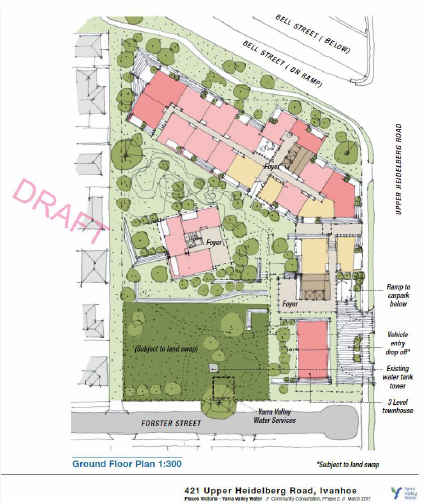
Feedback collected during Phase 1 was considered by the project architects and incorporated in a draft master plan that was introduced to the community in Phase 2.

# Phase 2

The second phase of engagement, between 14 March and 28 April 2017, presented findings from Phase 1 and introduced the draft master plan.

## Objective

The objective of engagement during Phase 2 was to understand peoples’ level of satisfaction with the way Places Victoria and their architects had translated feedback from Phase 1, into the design outcomes.

See the draft Ivanhoe Water Tank Site Master Plan below:

## Engagement activities

Engagement activities were designed to offer a range of opportunities to community members and project stakeholders and included:

* Stakeholder briefing sessions
* 2 x community workshops
* Dedicated project email and webpages
* A digital engagement platform
* A suite of communication materials including fact sheets, letters, emails, media and social media posts.

## Participation

A total of 51 people attended the information sessions with only 19 of those participants providing written feedback. The digital platform received 138 visitors during Phase 2 but only five visitors responded to the survey. Six people also provided feedback via the project email address some of whom may also have provided feedback via the online platform. Most participants lived in or around Ivanhoe and had a strong sense of connection to the site.

## Feedback

Feedback was received at community information sessions, via the digital engagement platform and by email. Feedback varied according to the channel, however, the key concerns continued to be associated with height, density, overshadowing, overlooking, traffic and the cumulative impacts of this and other developments in the area.

Formal feedback via the digital engagement platform and via feedback forms at information sessions responded to three key questions:

1. How do you feel about the overall design outcomes in the draft master plan?
2. How do you feel about the way we responded to your feedback within the draft master plan?
3. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Feedback forms asked participants to indicate their level of satisfaction, from very dissatisfied/ somewhat dissatisfied/ neither dissatisfied nor satisfied / somewhat satisfied/ to very satisfied, and why they felt that way.

## Key issues and concerns

Design outcomes

Most respondents (52 percent) at the information sessions were somewhat (47 percent) or very supportive (5 percent) of the overall design outcomes within the draft master plan.

Only 19 of the 51 people who attended the information sessions provided a written response. From these, reactions to individual design elements were substantially more mixed. Responses collected at information sessions are summarised in Table 1 below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *I am very dissatisfied with your response* | *I am somewhat dissatisfied with your response* | *I am neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* | *I am somewhat satisfied with your response* | *I am very satisfied with your response* |
| Overshadowing and overlooking | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 26% | 11% | 32% | 21% | 11% |
| Height and density | 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 47% | 21% | 11% | 16% | 5% |
| Traffic and access | 7 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 37% | 26% | 32% | 5% | 0% |
| Parking | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 21% | 37% | 26% | 11% | 5% |
| Need for open space | 1 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| 5% | 11% | 37% | 42% | 5% |
| Loss of trees and habitat on site | 1 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 2 |
| 5% | 11% | 16% | 58% | 11% |
| Cumulative impacts of this and other developments | 10 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 53% | 11% | 32% | 0% | 5% |
| The design reflecting community needs and aspirations | 7 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 0 |
| 37% | 5% | 37% | 21% | 0% |

Table 1: participants’ satisfaction with Places Victoria’s response to their feedback

### Observations

While the individual responses reflected high levels of dissatisfaction with particular elements, it is worth noting that the response rate was low with often only a single respondent commenting on an individual issue.

The issue of cumulative impacts reflects community frustration with nearby private sector developments that are seen to contribute to greater density in the area with associated impacts.

Overshadowing and overlooking

Concerns about apartment towers overlooking residents’ back yards, and the subsequent loss of privacy and sunshine remained, although responses represented a fairly even balance of opinion.

Participants at the first information session were concerned about overshadowing in the park, particularly during winter, while participants at the second information session discussed overshadowing and overlooking as being interlinked with height and density.

Two thirds of respondents who submitted feedback forms had no opinion or were satisfied with Places Victoria’s response to overshadowing. The remaining respondents were either very or somewhat dissatisfied with the response to feedback associated with overshadowing and overlooking.

Key concerns included loss of privacy (particularly prevalent amongst adjacent properties), lack of sunshine in the park area and the impact of shadows in the winter. Commentary suggests participants who were dissatisfied with the plan believed their feedback was ignored and dismissed.

Height and density

Height and density, from both a built form and population growth perspective, were key concerns for respondents.

Using feedback forms, 68 percent of information session participants suggested they were very or somewhat dissatisfied with the response to their concerns about height and density within the draft master plan.

Eleven percent of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 21 percent were somewhat or very satisfied with the response to their concern within the draft master plan.

The draft master plan includes a twelve-storey apartment building which is a significant concern, with participants suggesting it is too high and an inappropriate development for the area, while others were more positive, suggesting *“it wasn’t just a big lump of a building.”*

Some said they felt their feedback from Phase 1 was ignored regarding this specific issue. One participant, however, suggested the development was well balanced from a design point of view.

Traffic and access

Traffic and access along local streets remains a key concern for all participants. Currently both Forster Street and Linden Avenue are no-through roads, leading to a sense of neighbourhood ‘quietness’ and safety that is valued by the local community, particularly those with children.

One participant said “*Access to the site one way in and one way out is going to be difficult*”, another said *“I am pleased about the proposed vehicle access ONLY from Upper Heidelberg road and then direct to the underground car park”,* while another suggested *“Only left turns may cause cars to turn to side street and then cause congestion”.*

Parking

Increased parking for new residents and their visitors and those visiting the public open space, was a key concern for the local community. Participants suggested they did not support parking on local streets surrounding the development as it will impact connectivity and access to paths. Concerns about parking are linked to transport and access.

Two thirds of respondents remained concerned about parking.

Need for open space

Phase 2 participants agreed that there was a need for more public open space in the local area, to reflect the needs of a growing population.

Forty seven percent of respondents were either somewhat or very satisfied with the way their feedback on public open space had been responded to within the draft master plan.

Sixteen percent were somewhat or very dissatisfied. Participants who were dissatisfied believed that the open space was not large enough and that more needed to be done to incorporate green and recreational spaces within the development.

One person said “*I feel there needs to be more discussion on the park design*”, while another said “*Great to see government innovation on planning and development”.*

Loss of trees and habitat on site

Concerns were expressed that trees are being lost throughout the neighbourhood and that the mature trees on site may be lost with this development. To address this concern, the draft master plan retains two of the significant trees on site, whilst also incorporating greenery and landscaping in other areas around the development.

Most participants were satisfied with the way their concerns about loss of trees and habitat were addressed within the draft master plan, with 69 percent being somewhat or very satisfied with the response, 16 percent being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 16 percent being somewhat or very dissatisfied.

Cumulative impacts of this and other developments

Throughout the process, participants indicated their concern for the quantum of impacts from the various developments in the area, including the two adjacent developments along Bell Street, and other developments in Ivanhoe.

The design reflecting community needs and aspirations

A little less than half of those who responded via feedback forms felt dissatisfied about the way the draft master plan reflected community needs and aspirations.

A key reason for dissatisfaction appears to be related to people being concerned about the actual need for the development.

Friends of Banyule said it was a *“considered and well thought out overall design in our view”* and an information session respondent suggested *“I think it’s a very balanced development from a design point of view, I’m just very concerned about the detail*.”

# Conclusion

Engagement with the Ivanhoe community indicated a slim margin of support for the project overall at 52 percent, with varying levels of support for individual elements of the project and some dissatisfaction with the response to issues raised during Phase 1 engagement.

The engagement process returned a relatively low sample overall with 64 people participating in Phase 1 and 51 people participating in Phase 2. There is some overlap between the two Phases meaning that the total participation is potentially less than 100 individuals.

This reflects the local focus of the engagement that targeted impacted stakeholders, and was promoted principally through letterbox drops, postcode targeted social media, door knocks and local print media.

Community concerns remain around impacts such as overlooking, height, density and general impacts associated with increased population such as traffic and parking although the prospect of increased and better quality public open space was generally positively regarded.