

Place Making for The Built Environment
(ABPL90404_2024_SM2)

The Comfort Gardens

@Mark's Country Place



Project by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the Traditional caretakers of the land where our project sits in, belongs to the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples. We recognize their enduring connection to the land, which have always been places of community and culture. We also pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Distribution of responsibilities:

Joi Shan Fung (Alex)

Editing, Story of Place Analysis, Site Analysis, Nature (Connections to Team Name), Country/Indigenous Culture, Issues to be addressed, 10+ Places of Interest, 5P Framework, Programs Diagram, Advantages & Disadvantages of Social Media Venn Diagram, Cost Benefit Analysis Research, Potential Risks and Mitigation Strategies, Evaluation Approaches, PowerPoint, Final Report Layout/Design

Jasmine Wong

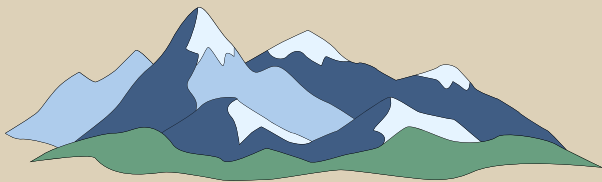
Editing, Master Plan Design, Story of Place Analysis, Nature (Wombat Infographic), Site Analysis, Engagement Strategies, 10+ Places of Interest, 5P Framework, Tactical Placemaking, Cost Benefit Analysis Diagrams/Tables, Expected Cost Calculations, Evaluation Approaches, Measuring Benefit Diagram, Monitoring Strategies, Precedent Studies, PowerPoint, "Hero Poster", Final Report Layout/Design

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Engagement with Stakeholders Diagram & Who are Involved, Key Place Values, 10+ Places of Interest & Sketches, 5P Framework, Tactical Placemaking, Expected Benefits, Evaluation Framework Diagram, PowerPoint, Final Report Layout/Design

We acknowledge that this report is 6600 words or less (6352 words), excluding the cover page, table of contents, acknowledgements, image & section captions, tables, diagrams and bibliographies.

1.0 'STORY OF PLACE' ANALYSIS



Mark's Country Place is located in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, known for its rich native forests, fertile lands, and its culinary culture. Positioned between the cities of Bendigo and Melbourne, the area is famous for the iconic Hanging Rock, making it a region of both natural and cultural significance.

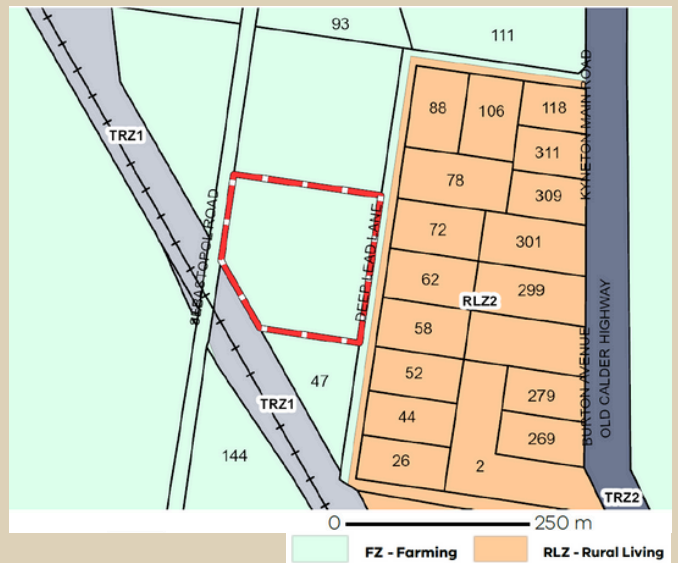
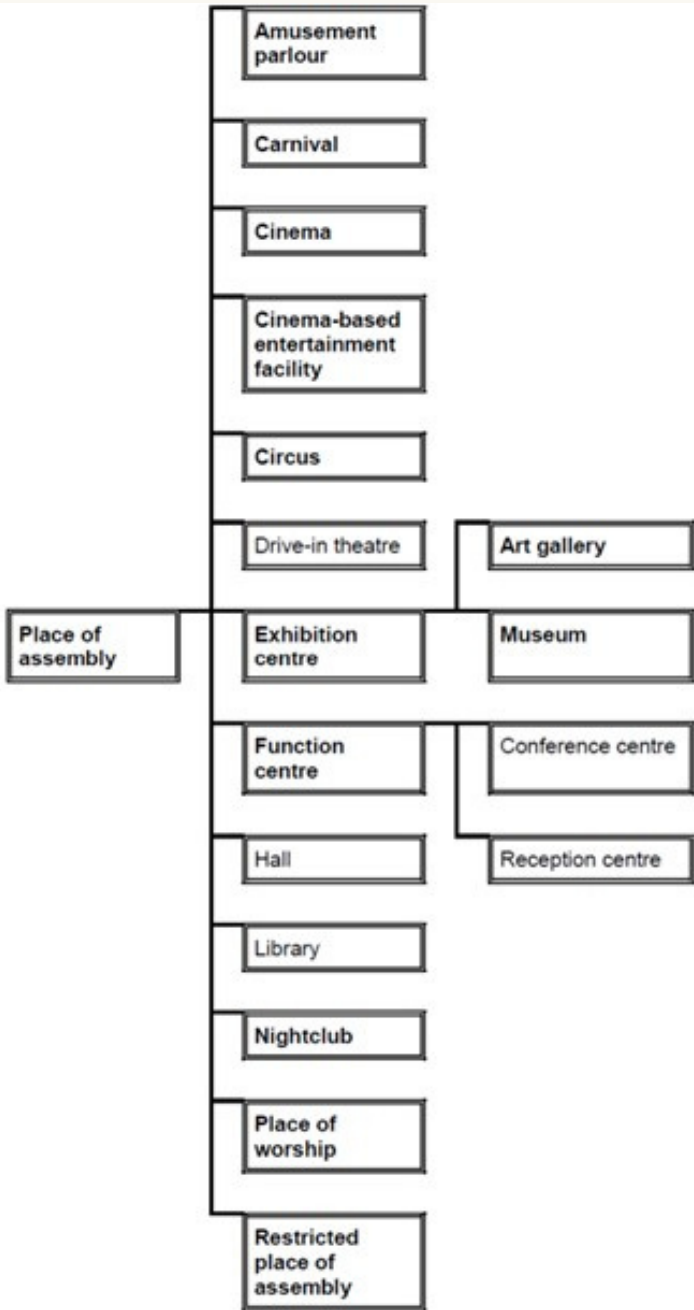


Figure 1. Land Use of the site and surround areas (Retrieved from Vic MapShare)



The site was a "Farming Zone" with an "Environmental Significance Overlay," ensuring that development maintains ecological integrity. Surrounding properties are classified under a "Rural Living Zone," reflecting a mix of agricultural use and residential living in a semi-rural environment.



But as of recently, the zoning of the plot has been rezoned by the owners of the land to become a “Place of Assembly”, which opens it to a variety of activities as outlined in the Planning scheme.

Figure 2. Permitted activities on “Places of Assembly”
(Retrieved from the Victorian Planning Scheme)



However, some of the activities do not fit the vision of the project. This project aims to leverage placemaking as a catalyst for change, addressing the site's specific challenges while responding to the needs of the local community and meeting council requirements to create a place that is inclusive to all while paying respects to the Aboriginal concept of Country.



1.1 NATURE

Why We Named
Ourselves After
Wombats



We named ourselves “*WombatEcoguardians*” because Wombats are amazing burrow-builders, corresponding to our aim of building a sense of place. Wombats have highly sensitive senses and communicate with different scents due to poor eyesight (Nuna Teal, 2024), corresponding to our aim to deliver designs that encourages visitors to heighten their senses to perceive the environment that communicates through senses, like a Wombat, to ensure everyone is included in the experience even if they have one or more disabilities.

1.2 COUNTRY

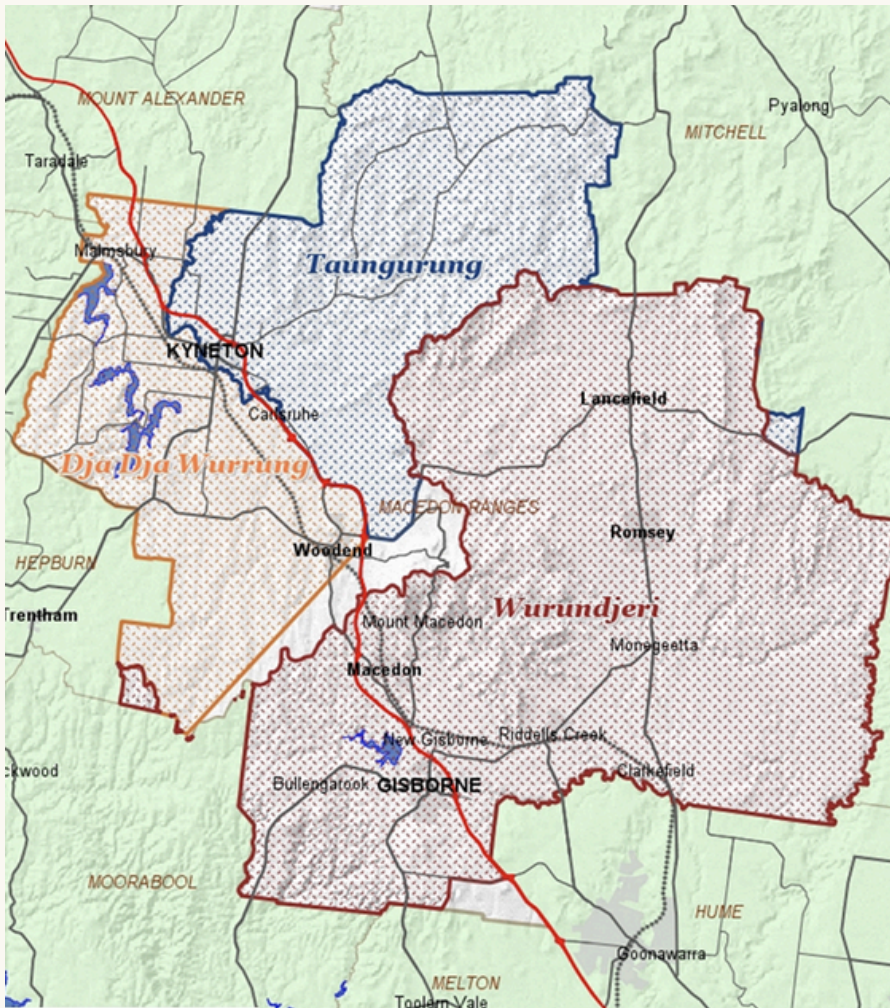


Fig 2. Registered Aboriginal Party Boundaries
(Retrieved from Macedon Ranges Shire Council)

Kyneton has a rich Aboriginal history with evidence of habitation by the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples as traditional custodians of the lands for at least 26,000 years. The Dja Dja Wurrung Country, which includes our site on the west side of the Campaspe River in Kyneton, stretches across central and northern Victoria. It was occupied by squatters in the year 1836 and was named Campaspe, renamed Kingston and later Kyneton (Black Hill Reserve Kyneton - History, n.d.).

There were clashes between the Aboriginals and the Colonisers in 1838 and at least 24 Aboriginals were killed (Black Hill Reserve Kyneton - History, n.d.). This was the same time when establishments such as a hotel, a police station, a fire station and an administrative centre were set up as a result of the development of the quarry (Kyneton Connections, 2021). The town then saw massive growth as the region was an important trading centre during the Gold Rush (Kyneton Connections, 2021). Today, Kyneton is a thriving rural centre known for its artistic and culinary scene, along with a range of events. It is the second-largest town in the shire, serving as a retail and service hub for nearby communities.

OUR APPROACH

Utilising sensory experiences to encourage people with disabilities (PWD) to experience and engage nature. Welcoming all community members to fostering the sense of community and care towards nature while reconciling past harm that was done to nature, Country and Aboriginals by consulting and encouraging Aboriginal groups to advise and take leading roles of land maintenance practices. By doing so, we reforge the connections of mankind to nature and Country by including, respecting and treating every matter as equal.

1.3 SITE ANALYSIS



Figure 3. Our observations during the site visit



1

Noise and Sound Considerations

- Frequent train passages, areas closer to the tracks can be noisy
- Appeals to train enthusiasts
- Noise-sensitive individuals may require shelters with sound barriers



2

Wildlife and Ecology

Birdlife:

- Rich birdlife (Cockatoos, Magpies and Ravens)
- Surrounding hedges and trees serve as bird habitats
- Gorse plants, though invasive, provide protection for smaller birds.



Other Wildlife:

- Kangaroos, rabbits, koalas, foxes, and wombats.
- Snakes are prevalent in warmer seasons when frogs are present.



Vegetation:

- Plants need to withstand extreme weather, dryness, heat, frost, and bushfires
- Canopies of trees catches fire easily
- Plants may be sourced from seed banks.
- Indigenous land management practices, like controlled burn-offs, could be beneficial.



Common vegetation on site:

- Gorse
- Briar Rose
- Blackberries
- Hawthorn
- Poplar trees & suckers
- Native Grasses
- Mon-native lawn grass



3 Topography and Soil

- The site is 500 metres above sea level, with clear skies ideal for stargazing.
- Uneven land with clayish black pug soil cracks in summer, poses challenges for both navigation and planting.
- Surface rocks are common



4 Water and Drainage

- Water table is 25-75 metres below ground.
- Water features include a small indent with water.
- Local households rely on aquifers, so chemical fertilisers should be avoided to prevent contamination.
- No town water or sewage systems



5 Climate and Weather

- Frost and snow are common
- Hot, dry summers lead to soil cracking and increased fire risk due to the lack of clearing foliage.
- The site experiences strong winds, and increased chances of sudden intense rainfall



6 Accessibility and Infrastructure

- The land's unevenness necessitates accessible features like boardwalks with railings, tactile tiles, and ramps.
- Shuttle buses and parking facilities are needed
- Poor active transport infrastructure
- Infrastructure like sound barriers, shelters



7

Cultural and Community Aspects

- A strong sense of community
- Local landmarks, including Mount Macedon, Kyneton Botanical Garden, "Kyneton Blue" tree, and Golden Mile, add to the site's appeal.
- "Place of Assembly" zoning allows for community-focused activities



8

Aesthetic and Recreational Potential

- The site offers different perspectives of Mount Macedon
- Golden hour creates a unique atmosphere.
- The community centre can sell artworks and photographs, which funds local infrastructure and maintenance
- Daffodils are a notable feature.
- The volcanic rocks and natural landscape provide aesthetic value and resource
- The site's dynamic seasonal changes and clear skies contribute to its appeal.

1.4 ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

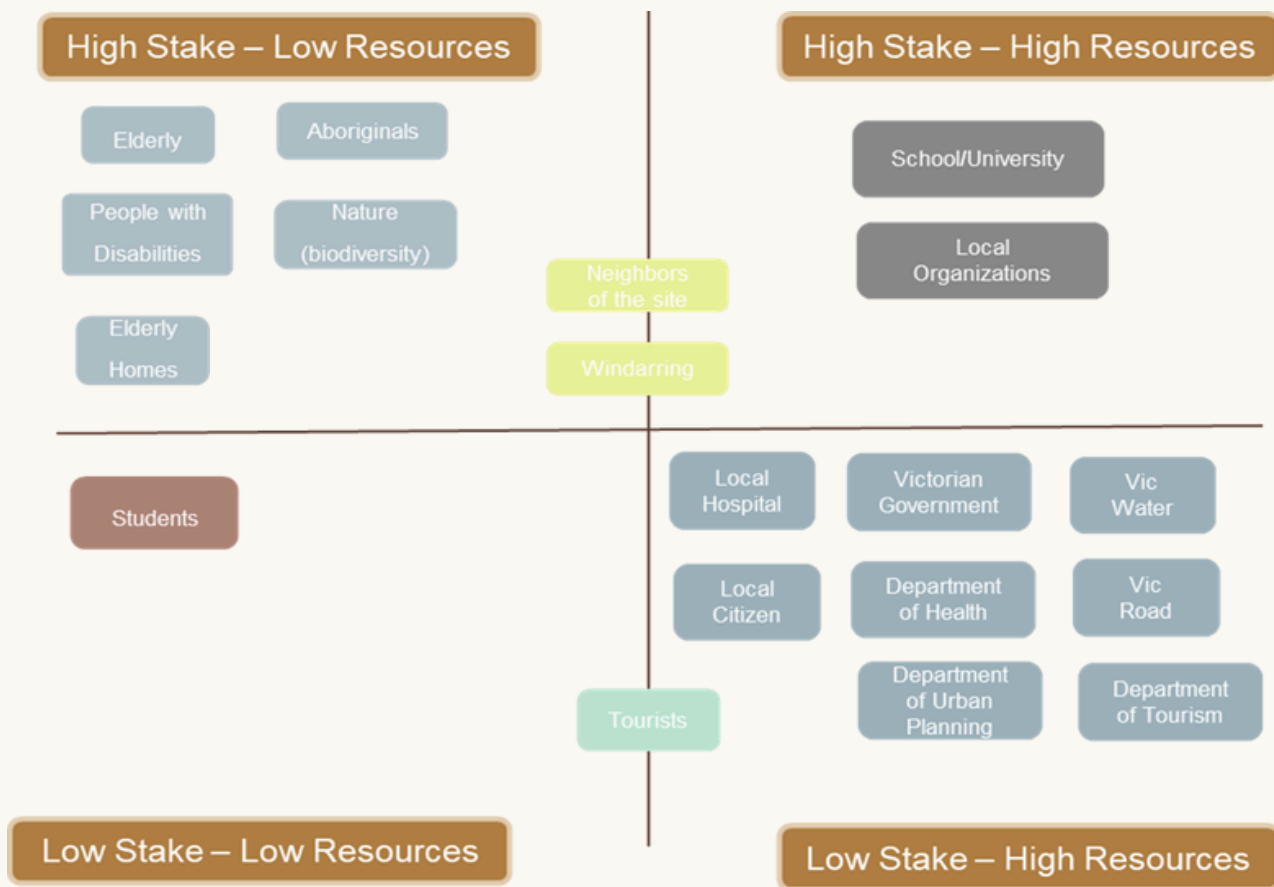


Figure 4. Stakeholder Analysis

WHO ARE INVOLVED:

Residents of Kyneton

Residents would be the majority that will be accessing this site. We will need to negotiate with residents on neighbouring sites as they will be directly affected when the site becomes popular. There is also an opportunity to cooperate with them to co-managing the site.

Tourists

Kyneton is not well known in the tourism industry, there are a lack of notable events except for the Daffodil Festival, and landmarks such as the Golden Mile and Mount Macedon. We will try to attract more visitors by creating incentives using our site.

Local Schools, Aged Care Centers, Hospital, Church of Kyneton (Windarring)

Apart from local residents, users of these nearby facilities would also be our target audience. Our project would create a therapeutic space and sense of care for nature. With the site being all inclusive and accessible, so that everyone can engage with nature and integrate into society as an active and productive member of the community. Church and Windarring will aid operations and assist PWD.

Local Government of Kyneton, Vic Water and Roads, Department of Public

Government departments ensure the site meets building regulations, especially in terms of abiding with state and local council strategies and policies. There is opportunity for cooperation as the developed site would help attract visitors to Kyneton, while departments help us with adequate infrastructure for operation and guidance on site management of tourist sites.

Environmental Conservation Efforts/Activists and Aboriginal Communities

Provides our planning team with data on local organisms and vegetation to ensure the development minimises disturbance to habitats. As the site sits on the lands of the DjaDja Wurrung People, collaborating with Aboriginal communities can provide us with indigenous knowledge and practices on designing for Country and respecting the site. Their knowledge would also be useful in dealing with increasing prevalence of bushfires, such as using techniques like Cool Burns, and managing overflowing water.

Nature

Non-human stakeholders, like animals and plants in nature are considered as important stakeholders. We respect their contribution to maintaining ecological balance of the site and put effort into minimising disturbances.

1.5 ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

We noticed the level of inaccessibility of areas around Kyneton despite 5.1% of the population (2604 people in 2021) requires daily help due to one or more disabilities while 53.3% of the disabled population is aged 85 or above. This is expected to increase as older adults have a higher risk of developing physical impairment and other disabilities on top of the already existing high number of people that require assistance. This may impact their mobility and ability to carry out daily activities (Moore et al., 2006).

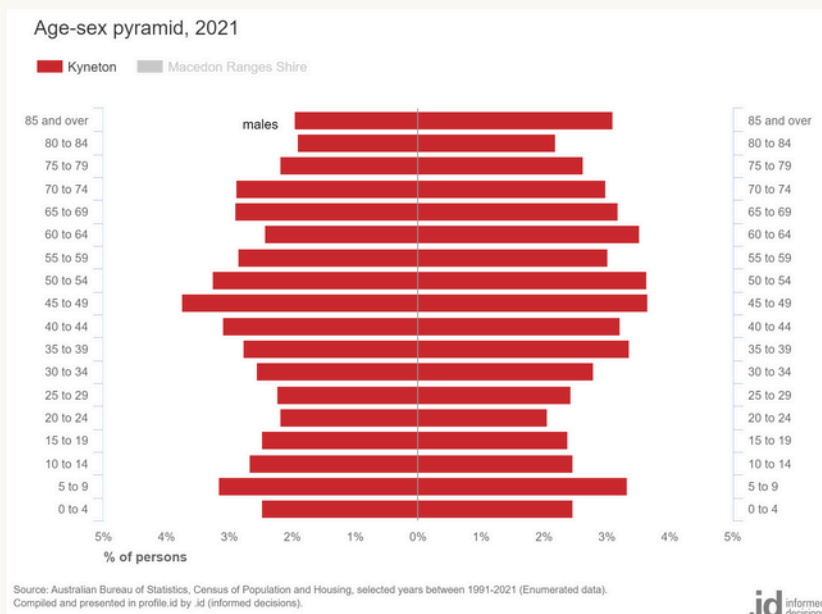


Figure 5. Age-Sex Pyramid of Kyneton in 2021 (Retrieved from idCommunity Profile)

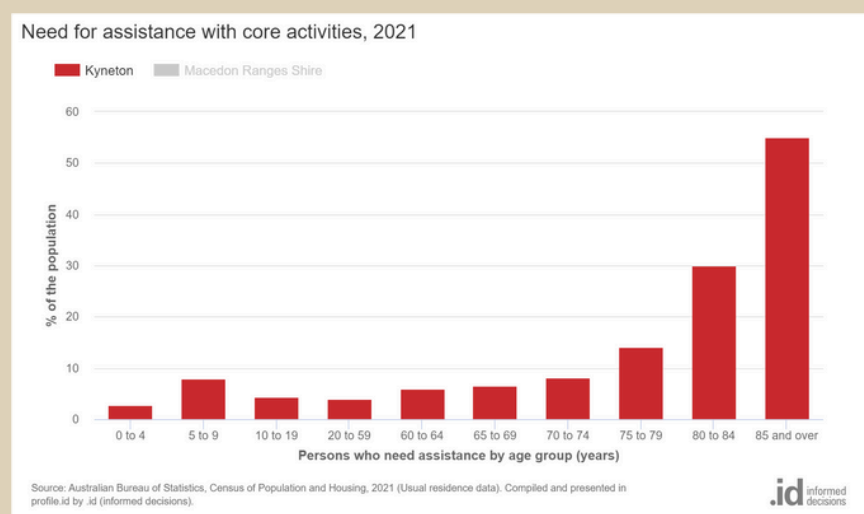


Figure 6. Percentage of population that needs assistance with core activities in Kyneton in 2021 (Retrieved from idCommunity Profile)

There is a lack of accessible public green spaces in Kyneton along with an increase of elderly projected on the Age Pyramid, the demand for accessible spaces is expected to increase along with the number of people requiring assistance to carry out daily activities as they move into the older demographics.

The developers mentioned that community projects are often not funded; lack of place that employs PWD and to acquire skills for employment, socialising and reintegrating into society (6.4% of PWD are reaching adulthood). The site was also inaccessible without driving.

There are not a lot of events in Kyneton, other than seasonal events like Farmers markets, community and daffodil festivals, suggesting that the site lacks incentives to attract and retain visitors. There is no mention of indigenous cultures/histories despite the site being rich in indigenous cultures/history, and the fact that there are in total 475 Aboriginals living around the area emphasises the importance to acknowledge, reconcile and reconnect with these groups of people by incorporating traditional practices and land management to the site. The development of the site may impact the quality of life of people living nearby. Lastly, we observed that the site is highly vulnerable to climate change.

2.0 PLACE STRATEGY: PRINCIPLES AND OUTCOMES

Purpose of Site:

To provide a welcoming and inclusive space for users including PWD, elderly, children to access, experience and care for nature and community.

Key Place Values:

2.1 Inclusion and Equity

Inclusion and equity is our focus for our placemaking values, to ensure that everyone within community members, regardless of their age, background or capability, have equal opportunities to access and derive advantages from shared spaces. Based on the 'Story of Place' analysis which emphasises the challenges in accessibility and inclusivity, our approach incorporates universal design principles and a sensory-rich environment. For example, uneven land will be addressed by constructing wheelchair-friendly paths and sensory gardens will provide engaging experiences for people with sensory impairments. To increase safety, pathways will be well-lit, equipped with railings and tactile pavement to accommodate PWD. Additionally, protected spaces and shaded seating will improve comfort and provide shelter. This approach not only meets local council criteria for accessible green spaces but also develops social cohesion by fostering connections across all demographics through multigenerational spaces and community-led activities (Treskon et al., 2021).

Community-led programs, like gardening workshops and nature-based therapies, will be implemented to encourage active participation from community members, breaking down social barriers and promoting inclusivity (Whyte, 1980). These strategies contribute to the development of Mark's Country Place by creating a sanctuary that is physically accessible and socially inclusive. This aligns with the broader vision of a community space that is welcoming to all, respectful of nature, and conducive to social interaction (Carmona, 2019).

2.2 Habitat and Biodiversity

Habitat and biodiversity are key components of a place's sustainability and resilience, especially in ecologically significant regions. The site, located in the Macedon Ranges, is rich in native flora and fauna, but it faces challenges like invasive species and habitat disruption. In this context, our approach to placemaking prioritises the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity by incorporating native plants and applying sustainable land management practices. These initiatives benefit the natural environment and contribute to the goals of sustainability (Beatley, 2011). In addressing the specific biodiversity challenges, the design prioritises the restoration of native habitats and preventing ecological degradation (McKinney, 2006). Including indigenous plants will help to restore natural habitats and support local fauna; managing invasive species such as gorse and blackberry will protect the ecosystems' integrity. Moreover, sustainable water management measures, like natural drainage systems, will reduce habitat damages caused by flooding and erosion (Nassauer, 2012). These strategies preserve Mark's Country Place's natural beauty and ensure that it continues to be a sanctuary for people and wildlife, strengthening the site's role as a place where nature and community can coexist and adapt to the changing climate and environment.

2.3 Variability

Variability in placemaking allows spaces to adapt to a variety of activities and needs. Mark's Country Place's design highlights flexibility, creating places suitable for a variety of purposes, from solitary introspection to group meetings (Carmona, 2019). By incorporating movable seating, multi-purpose areas, and spaces that accommodate both quiet and active uses, creating a dynamic hub for community engagement. This adaptability is critical for serving Kyneton's diverse population and ensuring that everyone finds value in different spaces. Beyond physical adaptation, the design incorporates cultural and social components to foster community belonging. Spaces for community art installations and storytelling commemorate local tradition, creating a shared narrative that promotes the community's identity (Whyte, 1980).

3.0 PLACE ACTIVATION PLAN

3.1 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

01 | Transparent Canvas Visualization

Target Group:

All community members, with a focus on the elderly and PWD.

Activity:

Provide transparent canvases where participants can draw or write what they envision, with the site as a background. Caretakers, staff, and members of Windarring will assist participants. People can suggest facilities they need to maintain their wellbeing and health.



Goal:

To gather ideas and improvements the community desires for Kyneton, integrating them into the site's design. And to use this opportunity for people to communicate with each other to negotiate about what they wanted to see in Mark's Country Place, to create an inclusive space where everyone's opinions can be heard.

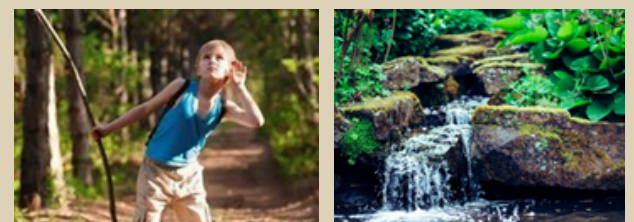
02 | Multi-sensory Evaluation

Target Group:

Community members, especially PWD.

Activity:

Playing recorded site sounds and asking participants to rank them based on comfort and enjoyment. Touching a materials brought from the site. Inviting participants to use their senses to experience the site.



Follow-up group discussions allows participants to share stories related to their sensory experiences, adding a personal touch to the feedback process. The same activity would be repeated specifically for PWD as they experience the environment differently (Kosanic et al., 2022)

Goal:

Identifying pleasant sounds and undesirable noises to make the site more welcoming. Foster a deeper connection with nature that is multi-sensory. Gather feedback on the sensory experience, and identify additional points of interest on the site.

03 | Community Art Installation

Target Group:

Local artists, children, and creative individuals.

Activity:

Organise an art workshop where participants create pieces inspired by the site. Work with children to visualise ideas for a nature playground by using model-making activities. These artworks can be installed temporarily around the site.

Goal:

Encourage artistic expression and create a visually engaging environment that reflects the community's connection to the site, and to increase awareness of the town's youth about the concept of care for the environment (Song, 2009).



04 | Utilising social media to find points of interest and preferences

Target Group:

Everyone in the community

Activity:

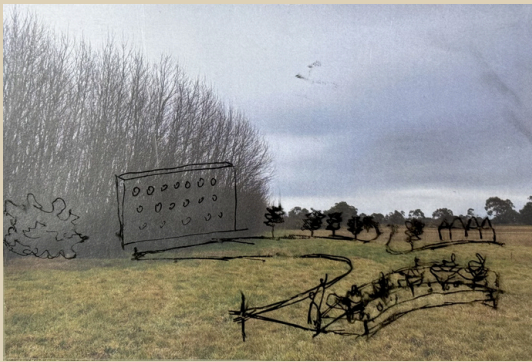
Using online survey tools like Calvium/Poll Everywhere to engage with community members to gather opinions of different aspects of the community and special needs.

Goal:

Engaging with locals to understand their needs so that we can incorporate it into our design to create incentives for people to visit. This is important for PW, as we will also understand special equipment these people need.

3.1.1 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In week 7, we collected valuable feedback by presenting our proposal to peers who role-played as stakeholders, including a farmer, an architect, and a nearby resident. With site photos in hand, they sketched their ideas for the space, suggesting features such as:



Textured wall and scented shrubs for visually-impaired users



Gardening zone for farmers



Elevated wooden deck



Seatings & Statue



Children playground



Fishing pond

3.2 PLACEMAKING DESIGN

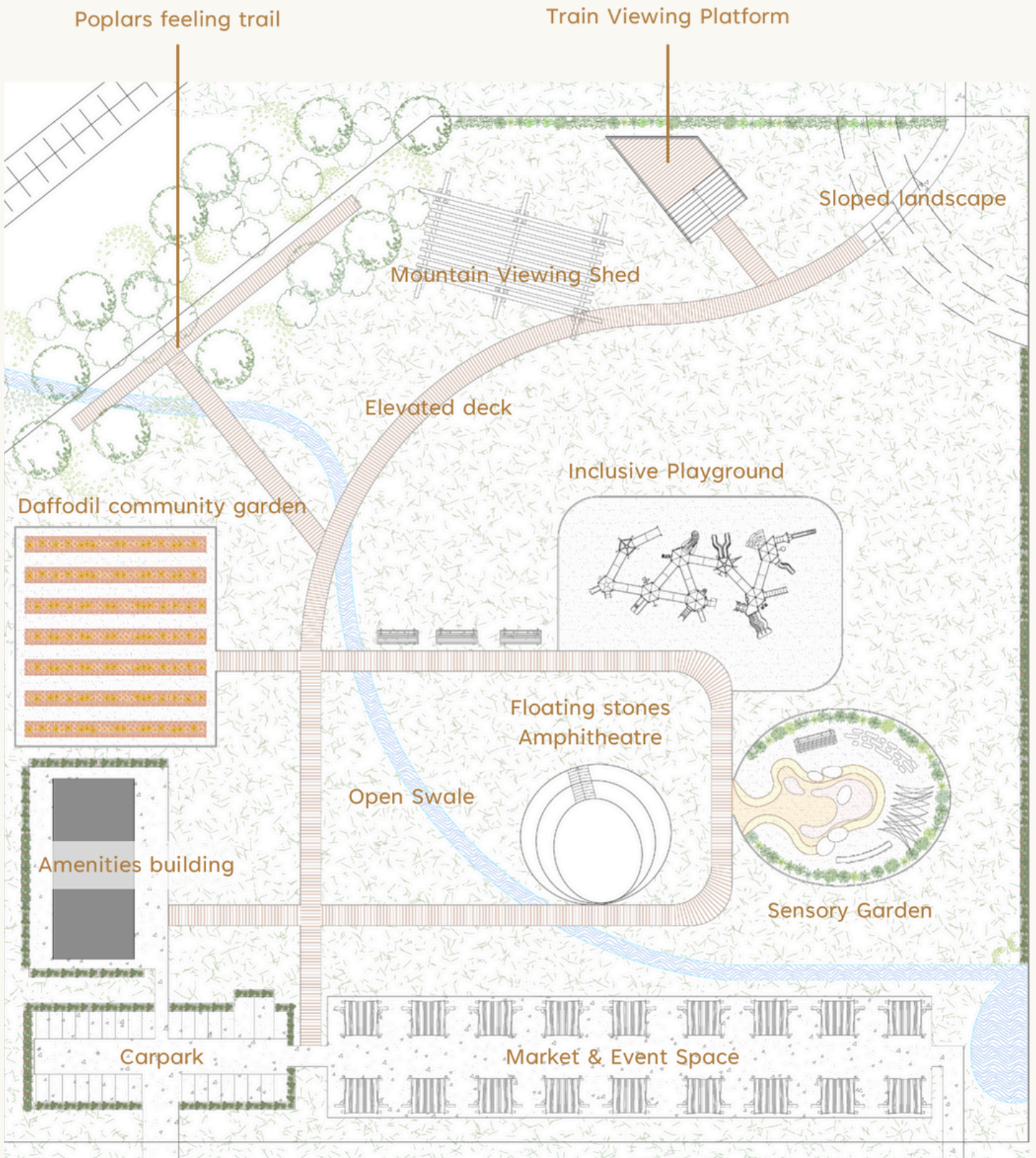


Figure 7. The Master Plan of our proposal

10+ PLACES OF INTEREST

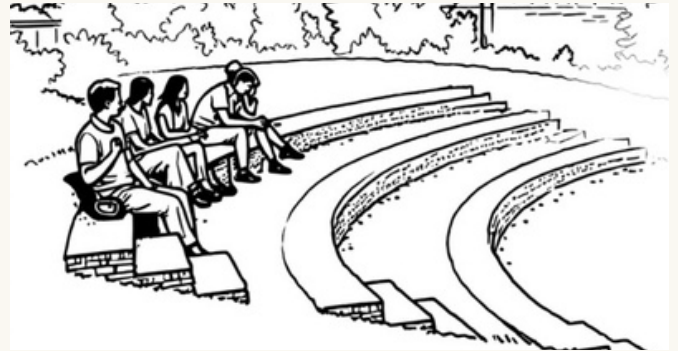
1. Poplar Boardwalk

The Poplar Boardwalk is a wooden boardwalk installed within poplar trees on the site. It provides an immersive sensory experience walking through a forest and reconnect to nature. The boardwalk will be equipped with safety railings, tactile tiles and lights installed to ensure accessibility and safety.



2. Floating Stones Amphitheatre

The Floating Stones Amphitheatre will be a place where performances take place. All seats will be accessible and no electronics such as speakers/amplifiers will be installed. Local theatres, poetry reciting and storytelling by community members will be scheduled.



3. Train Viewing Platform

An elevated wooden platform will be set up for visitors, especially children who like seeing the trains, to view and take pictures of trains safely. The platform is equipped with a ramp and railings, and will be kept at a minimal height due to safety considerations.



4. Elevated Walking Deck

A secured wooden deck will be constructed throughout the site to provide universal access. It overlooks an ocean of seasonal grass, which is identified in site analysis to change colours throughout seasons. Visitors can enjoy expansive views while strolling on the deck and relaxing in open areas.



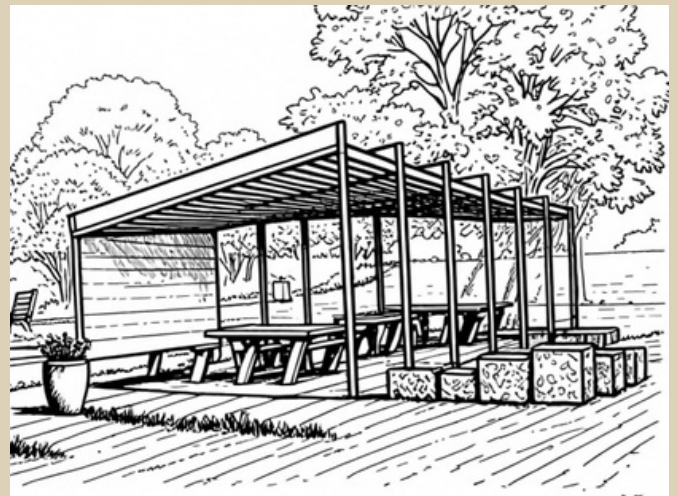
5. Pop-up Market and Event Space

These market spaces would be empty slots where the community members can sell handmade products. It will also act as a community space where people can socialise, generating social cohesion and sense of community.



6. Mount Macedon Viewing Shelter/ Gazebo

This shelter provides visitors with a space for contemplation and relaxation, positioned for panoramic views of Mount Macedon. The shed will be installed with sound-proofing materials for people who are sensitive to loud noises, to seek shelter. We will keep track of the train schedules to inform visitors.



7. Bridge over open swale

To enhance flood resilience and create a unique water feature with soothing sounds, we try to guide overland flows with an open swale that leads to the pond. To ease navigation, we will install bridges over the swale and ensure that the structures holding up the bridge will not get damaged from erosion.



8. Daffodil Community Garden

The daffodil community garden would be a community project where people can “adopt” a daffodil bulb and take care of it until it is mature. We hope to foster a sense of ownership and care for nature and spread it throughout their community.



9. Sensory Garden

The sensory garden is designed for visitors with varying needs to experience the natural environment through senses. Different sounds, textures, and smells will be incorporated into textured paths and interactive seating and play areas.



10. Inclusive Playground:

The playground features accessible play equipment. Designed to provide all children a chance to partake in natural play.

It encourages children to interact with each other to develop social skills and a sense of belonging (Veitch et al., 2021).



11. Sloped Landscaping

The landscape would be modified to increase walkability and accessibility. We are aware of the potential impacts such as increasing prevalence of flooding. To mitigate the impacts, additional instalments such as the “sponge” surfaces will be installed in areas that floods.



5P FRAMEWORK



Figure 8. 5P Framework of our proposal

Our design is guided by the 5P framework. The project will be a community-led effort, ensuring inclusivity and flexibility and prioritising local voices

People: Bottom-up (Community-led)

The community of Kyneton would lead discussions with our guidance. Task teams such as maintenance groups or event planning groups can be formed through community volunteers. The project welcomes different opinions, designs can evolve based on feedback.

Process:

Our 'Process' is participatory, involving consultations and asset-based design from community feedback.

- Consultation

Inclusive activities like brainstorming drawings, sensory surveys and site tours will engage people with different backgrounds and abilities. Feedback will guide improvements and risk mitigation.

- Co-design

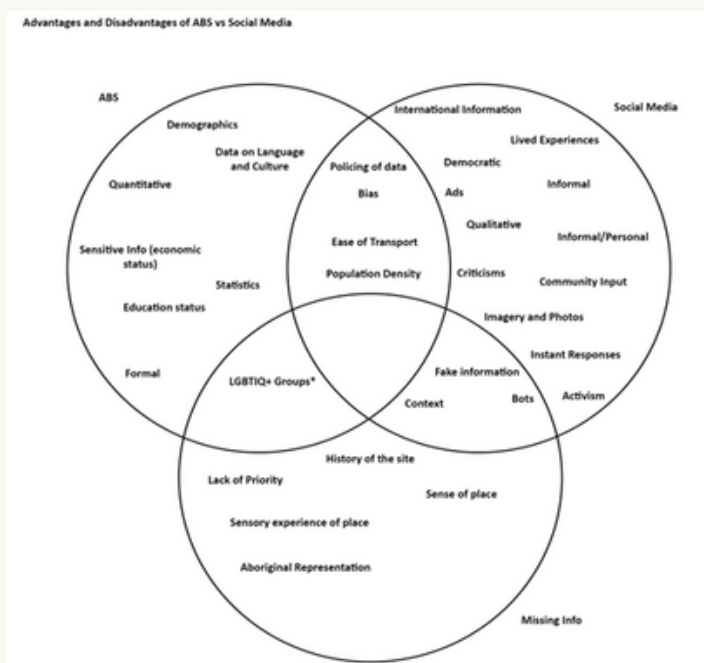
The community will lead the design process, with our team guiding conversations through themes and prompts. The final product will reflect community ideas combined with our interpretations.

- Iterative

We will maintain ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, holding regular meetings to ensure feedback is incorporated. Community priorities and challenges will shape the evolving design, with negotiations helping balance opinions.

- Informing Community

We will inform the community about the project's goals and themes based on research and observations in Kyneton, incorporating local knowledge and Aboriginal land management practices. Regular updates will be shared through forums and local news agencies/papers.



- Asset Based

By gathering stories and examining social media, we aim to capture community insights on living in or visiting Kyneton that may not be evident in government data, building on local knowledge to address gaps in our understanding of Kyneton.

Figure 9. Comparison of Social Media with other information sources

Fostering a permanent space that will change with community needs. The 'Product' emphasises inclusivity, with diverse sensory experiences and sustainable, long-term planning.

Product: Varies from tactical to permanent strategies

The Product is scalable and adaptable, starting with smaller tactical placemaking activities that engage local neighbours and improve based on feedback. Over time, we will introduce medium and long-term installations to attract visitors from outside the area, supporting sustainable development.

There will be both permanent features and seasonal, evolving elements to encourage revisits and ensure the project remains dynamic and responsive to community needs.

Program:

'Program' focuses on sensory-rich experiences, creating connections to nature and fostering an inclusive, resilient space for all. Major agendas include:

- Sensory Experiences: Prioritising equitable access for PWD to experience nature using senses beyond sight.
- Accessible and Inclusive Nature: Ensuring the site is designed for inclusivity, offering equitable natural spaces.
- Reconnection to Country and Nature
- Fostering Care for Nature and Community
- Resilience

3.3 SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES (TACTICAL PLACEMAKING)

Daffodil Gardening Project

The Daffodil Community Garden will be pilot-tested by hosting a community planting event. Participants are invited to plant daffodils and provide them with continuous care. Planting stations, tools, and seeds will be provided to increase accessibility.

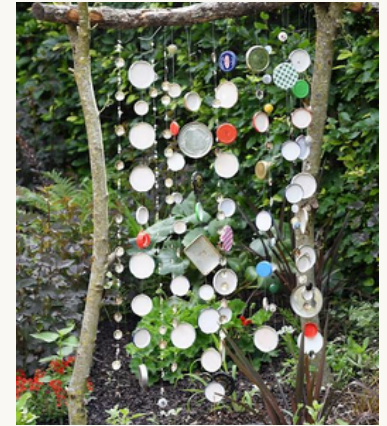


This project hopes to establish a community bond and environmental stewardship (Krasny & Tidball, 2009). Participants will feel invested as they see their flowers bloom each season. The project initiates early involvement with the space, providing a sense of ownership to participants.

It creates a visually appealing feature, drawing interest from the locals and grows organically over time. Pilot-testing the Daffodil Garden and other small-scale placemaking elements early in the process, while continuing the design and planning process of the site, provides the opportunity to iterate and refine permanent construction plans based on early results, leading to a responsive and inclusive design.

Temporary Sensory Garden

Begin developing the Sensory Garden by installing features like fragrant herbs, textured paths, and multi-sensory seating areas. The Sensory Garden creates a tranquil space for visitors to enjoy, while setting the foundation for expansions that can include water features, interactive installations, and other sensory experiences. The therapeutic environment and elements of play stimulates different senses, catering to those with disabilities (Quality Health Care, 2023). These features are low-cost and can be moved to other locations upon the permanent set-up of the site.

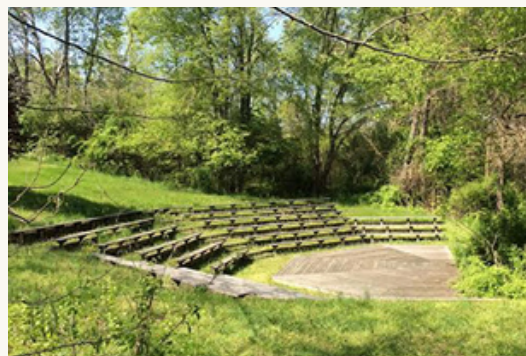


3.4 MEDIUM-TERM ACTIVITIES

Amphitheatre Programming

Activate the Floating Stones Amphitheatre by organising community performances, such as story reciting, poetry readings, and local theatre productions. Establish partnerships with local artists, cultural and aboriginal organisations to schedule monthly or seasonal events.

Benefit: This creates a recurring attraction for visitors, increasing the visibility and popularity of the site. It encourages social interaction, deepening cultural and social connections (Irwin et al., 2017), and educates locals and tourists about the story of Country. Transforming the amphitheatre into a cultural hub and engage with the arts in nature.



Permanent Playground Set-up

Installing accessible play equipment, such as sensory swings, wheelchair-friendly merry-go-rounds, and ground-level play panels. We will engage landscape designers and disability advocates to ensure accessibility. Establishing an inclusive playground enhances the site's reputation as a community destination for all children, encouraging family visits and early engagement.



3.5 LONG-TERM ACTIVITIES

Community Partnerships

Build partnerships with local community groups, schools, and volunteers to adopt areas within Mark's Country Place for ongoing maintenance and care. Develop programs like "Adopt-a-Spot" where individuals or groups are responsible for maintaining sections of the site, such as gardens, walking paths, or amenities. We aim to collaborate with local taxi/carsharing and bus services to increase accessibility to the site and to further reduce the amount of cars arriving at the site which may impact the quality of life of neighbours and wildlife due to fumes and noise (Salvi & Salim, 2019).

This ensures consistent maintenance through community involvement while fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. It reduces the operational burdens and encourages regular community engagement.



Seasonal Festivals

Establishing a calendar of events to activate the site throughout the year, such as seasonal farmers' markets, art installations, guided walks, or outdoor wellness activities. Launch a pop-up market featuring local artisans, farmers, and craftspeople from Kyneton and surrounding areas.

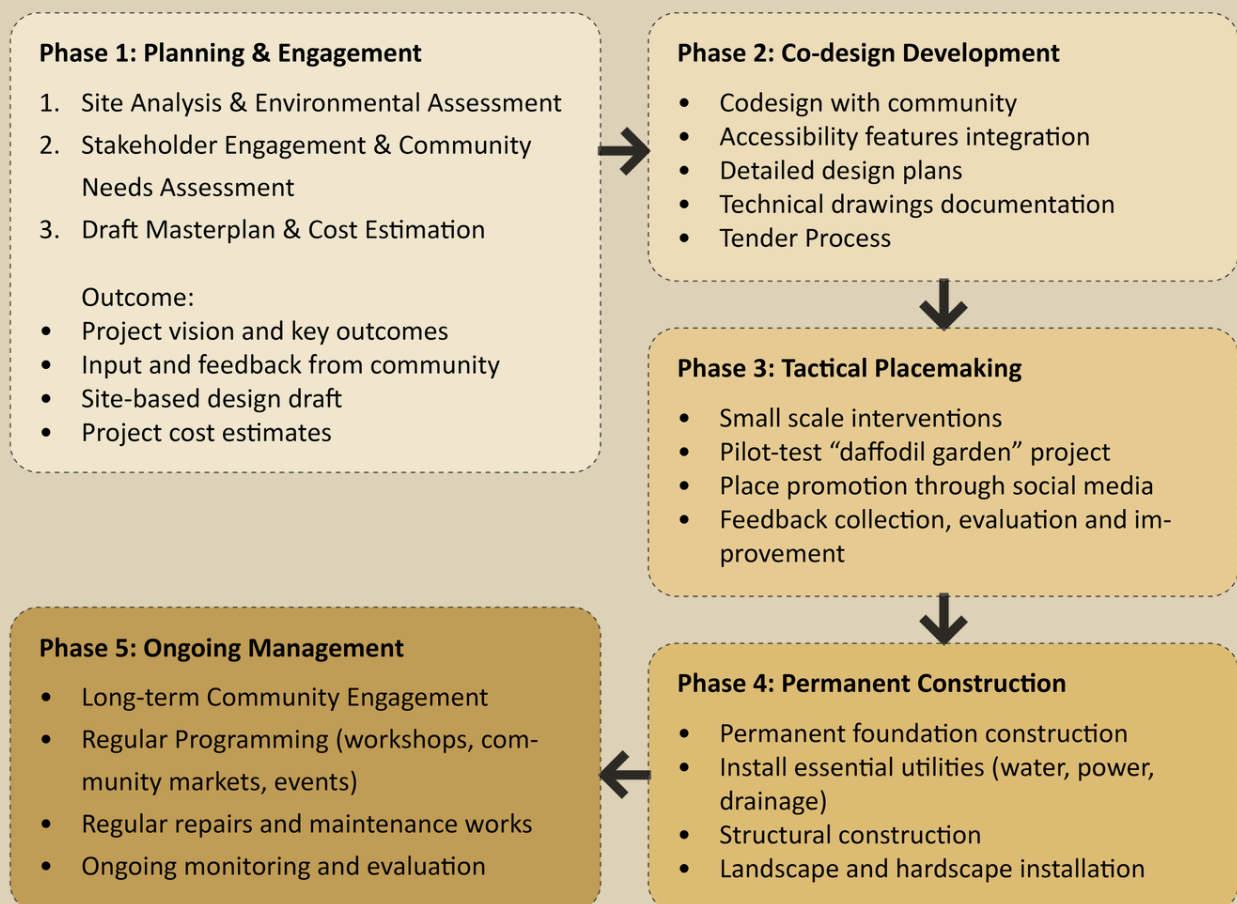
Offering immersive experiences, such as nature trails or educational tours. Organise large-scale seasonal festivals like the Kyneton Daffodil & Arts Festival, the Macedon Ranges Wine & Food Budburst Festival and the Kyneton Agricultural Show. These festivals can celebrate the seasonal changes in the landscape.

Regularly scheduled events keep the site active and encourage revisits. This promotes the space as a vibrant community hub that attracts different demographics. Seasonal festivals will increase regional and national awareness, drawing in tourists and creating economic opportunities. This strengthens the local economy, and positions Mark's Country Place as a centre for community events and a flexible space that supports local commerce.



4.0 BUSINESS CASE

The phased timeline for Mark's Country Place outlines a strategic approach to building and sustaining the site. Each phase has been designed to support meaningful community involvement, ensure thoughtful and adaptive site development, and establish long-term management practices.



Developed based on *Placemaking methodology for public place projects* (Source: John Mongard Landscape Architects, *Place Practice Procedures* [2018])

4.1 COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Total Estimated Cost (10 year Timeframe)		\$23,659,723
Value of Benefits (Annual)		\$ 14,200,000
Benefit	Estimated Value	
Local Business Development	\$500,000	
Job Creation + Volunteers	\$1,200,000	
Tourism + Events Revenue	\$4,000,000	
Savings from Health and Wellbeing	\$7,000,000	
Social Connectedness	\$1,500,000	
Cost-Benefit Analysis (10-year Timeframe)		
Estimated Total Benefits	\$142,000,000	
Estimated Total Costs	\$21,343,723	
Net Benefit	\$120,656,277	
Benefit-cost Ratio	6.65 : 1	

Figure 10. Overall Cost-Benefit Analysis Table

To provide a grounded estimation of expected costs and benefits of Mark’s Country Place, we developed an evaluation over a 10-year timeframe, resulting in a cost-benefit ratio of 6.65 to 1, highlighting the potential long-term benefits of the project relative to its costs. This analysis was conducted by calculating square meter rates based on the project design and referencing two comparable projects of similar scale and nature.

References for cost-benefit analysis

We referenced two projects, both situated in rural areas and designed as community and events hubs. With our project costs estimated at approximately \$20 million, we found it to be midway between the scale and budget of these examples.

The *Shire of Chittering Muchea Club and Changeroom Redevelopment Project* is a \$4 million initiative located in Muchea, Western Australia. This redevelopment aims to enhance the recreational experience for the local community and improve the site's overall functionality for future sports and community activities. Funding has been provided through a combination of local council contributions and external grants, including support from the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF).

Annual Operating Costs Analysis

Operating Budget	FY18/19 Budget	FY19/20 Budget	FY20/21 Budget	FY21/22 Budget	FY22/23 Budget	FY23/24 Budget
Operating Costs						
Operations for Existing Hall	\$12,916	\$13,174	\$13,438	\$13,707	\$13,981	\$14,260
Maintenance for Existing Hall	\$28,105	\$28,667	\$29,240	\$29,825	\$30,422	\$31,030
Operations & Maintenance for Oval	\$62,014	\$63,254	\$64,519	\$65,810	\$67,126	\$68,468
Operations for New Club & Changerooms	-	\$15,000	\$15,300	\$15,606	\$15,918	\$16,236
Maintenance for New Club & Changerooms	-	\$37,500	\$38,250	\$39,015	\$39,795	\$40,591
Asset Renewal Fund for New Club & Changerooms	-	\$47,600	\$47,600	\$47,600	\$47,600	\$47,600
Total Operating Costs	\$103,035	\$205,196	\$208,348	\$211,563	\$214,842	\$218,187
Operating Revenue						
Annual Club Fees	\$4,221	\$4,500	\$4,590	\$4,682	\$4,775	\$4,871
Casual Hire Income	\$384	\$500	\$510	\$520	\$531	\$541
Total Operating Revenue	\$4,605	\$5,000	\$5,100	\$5,202	\$5,306	\$5,412
Net Operating Result	-\$98,430	-\$200,196	-\$203,248	-\$206,361	-\$209,536	-\$212,774

10-years Estimated Benefits

Benefit Area	Future Value of Benefits over 10 years
Employment	\$5,299,720
Gross Regional Product	\$1,320,000
Community Health plus Productivity	\$3,476,250
Social Connectedness	\$8,250,000
Volunteering	\$12,225,300

Figure 11. Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Muchea Club project (Retrieved from NAJA Business Consulting Services, Report for the Shire of Chittering Project (2019))

The *Lyndoch Recreation Park Precinct Redevelopment and Expansion Project* is a large-scale \$40 million project located in the Barossa Valley, South Australia. Co-funded by the South Australian Government and the Barossa Council, this development includes new sporting ovals, multipurpose buildings, and event spaces to host community sports, regional events, and professional-level AFL matches.

Annual Operating Costs Analysis

Table 4-1 Total current annual costs (Base case scenario)					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Operating Expenses					
Depreciation	172,379	175,827	179,343	182,930	186,589
Employee Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Contractors	34,014	34,694	35,388	36,096	36,818
Other Costs	2,941	3,000	3,060	3,121	3,183
ESL Levy	1,250	1,275	1,301	1,327	1,353
Electricity and Gas Consumption	11,226	11,563	11,910	12,267	12,635
Water	11,696	12,047	12,408	12,780	13,164
Insurance (Asset & liability)	13,780	14,193	14,619	15,058	15,510
Total operating	247,286	252,598	258,028	263,578	269,251
Maintenance Expenses					
Employee Costs	26,648	27,180	27,724	28,279	28,844
Contractors	386	393	401	409	417
Other Costs	4,657	7,946	11,302	14,724	18,215
Total maintenance	31,690	35,520	39,427	43,412	47,477

Annual Estimated Benefits

Table 4-3 Summary of economic benefits under Option 1: Reference Project		
	Economic benefit	\$ value
1	Increased number of events and resultant expenditure	\$8,346,000
2	Increase in volunteer activities	\$233,100
3	Savings in health costs	\$1,279,814

Figure 12. Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Lyndoch Recreation Park project (Retrieved from Barossa Council, Lyndoch Recreation Park Cost Benefit Analysis (2024))

Breakdown for total costs:

Time Cost **Min. 20 months**

Stage	Period
Planning permits	6-18 months
Design	2-6 months
Site Preparation	1 month
Construction	6-8 months

Yearly Operating Cost **\$ 237,000**

Item	Cost
Employee Costs	\$95,000
Maintenance Costs	\$67,000
Electricity & Gas Consumption	\$6,000
Water Consumption	\$15,000
Insurance (Asset & Liability)	\$54,000

Labour Cost **\$1,900,000**
(assuming 10% of Construction Cost)

Position	Fees
Architect	5% of Cost of Works
Landscape Architect	
Planning Consultants	
Indigenous Consultants	3% of Cost of Works
Disability Consultants	
Position	Hourly Rates
Site Supervisor	\$60-100
Concreters	\$50
Plumbers	\$60-120
Carpenter	\$265
Electricians	\$50-100
Woodwork Services	\$77
Gardeners	\$30-80

Construction Cost (Site Area: 37255 m²) **\$ 19,389,723**

Site Preparation **\$ 1,862,750**

Item	Square-meter Rate	Area	Cost
Demolition of existing structures and unwanted grass	\$25	37255	\$931,375
Site works (Clearing, grassing, large areas topsoil treating)	\$25	37255	\$931,375

Landscaping & Soil Rentention

\$ 15,644,713

Item	Square-meter Rate	Area	Cost
Soft Landscape	\$150	21726	\$3,258,900
Rock Landscape	\$500	563	\$281,500
Hard Landscape (wooden decks fully drained)	\$1,200	9476	\$11,371,200
Wood Varnish	\$32-86	2347	\$75,104
Steel Tactile Flooring (300x600mm sheet)	\$55	25 sheets	\$1,375
Mulch (Sponge installments around creek)	\$80 per cubic meter	828	\$66,240
Bioretention Soils (transition sand and filter media)	\$660-680 per cubic meter	828	\$546,480
Gravel (class 2 rocks)	\$78 per cubic meter	563	\$43,914

Daffodil Garden

Prime Cost \$ 30,000

Item	Unit Price
Gardening box	\$80-100 per box
Daffodil flower pots (can be provided by community)	\$45 per terracotta pot of 30x30 sized pot
Daffodils	\$1.8 per bulb
Soils (can be provided by community)	\$395 (7 cubic meters) to \$650 (15 cubic meters)
Gardening equipments	\$20-100 per unit
Organic/Homemade Fertilizers	Provided by community/Community Compost Box
Compost box	\$150 per box

Playground

Prime Cost \$ 80,000

Item	Square-meter Rate / Unit Price
Pavement	\$60-85
Protective mats	\$100
Playground equipment	Medium budget: \$22,000-36,700
Railings	\$300-400
Seatings	\$500
Soundproofing materials	\$100

Marketplace & Amenities Building

\$ 1,772,260

Item	Square-meter Rate	Area	Cost
Single-storey basic amenities building (with restrooms, office, activity rooms, storage, services)	\$2,500	557	\$1,392,500
Fixtures and fittings	-		\$50,000
Concrete external paving	\$60-85	5496	\$329,760

Detailed breakdown for reference:

Foundation	\$135	Waterproof tiling	\$4,300
Concrete slabs and walls	\$75-100	Waterproof ceiling	\$500
Windows and glazing	\$265	Lighting	\$400 per unit
Carpentry	\$150-200	Doors	\$1,200 per unit
Plumbing installations	\$8000-12,000	Braille Sign Boards	\$25 per unit
Electrical services	\$50-100	Signages	\$300 per unit
Paint	\$50	Restroom exhaust system	\$250 per unit
Flooring	\$30-80	Toilet Grab Rails	\$290 per unit
		Mirror	\$325 per unit

4.2 EXPECTED BENEFITS

The planned investments in Mark's Country Place will provide long-lasting benefits, focusing on community needs, sustainability, and inclusivity.

Improving Accessibility and Inclusion

Spending on accessibility, like ramps, tactile flooring, and inclusive playground equipment will make the space more accessible. Restrooms and infrastructure will be installed with non-slip materials to accommodate people with different needs. These elements ensure that PWD can enjoy the space, and feel more included as part of the wider community. This encourages visitors, particularly families, the elderly, and PWD to visit.

Sustainable Environmental Management

Investments in bioretention soils and natural drainage will help reduce flooding risks. Native tree planting will strengthen landscape resilience, to protect the site from hazards like erosion and heavy precipitation.

Raw materials are sourced within Australia to reduce carbon footprints of transportation and construction. This also eliminates contingents or invasive species and maintains ecological balance.

Community and Cultural Engagement

Spaces for cultural interaction, like the amphitheatre and pop-up market, will host a variety of events. Promoting community cohesion and serve as a hub for locals and visitors.

Health and Well-Being

The sensory garden and community garden provide a therapeutic and peaceful setting where people can participate and interact with nature. They provide mental health benefits such as stress reduction and develop social connections. Maintaining these areas requires physical activity, promoting healthier lifestyles.

Safety and Durability

Safety features like protective playground mats and soundproofing ensures that the site is comfortable and safe for visitors. The use of durable materials such as varnished wood and steel flooring ensures that the infrastructure will last over time, eliminating needs for repairs, saving maintenance costs.

Local business development

Market areas and event facilities provide a platform for local commerce, boosting the local economy. By providing space for local markets, the project can support local farmers, artisans, and small-scale producers.

Job Creation

The construction, maintenance, and operation will create both short-term and long-term employment opportunities.

Tourism

Creation of unique and inclusive spaces can attract tourists, especially with the Macedon Ranges nearby. Visitors may be drawn to events, markets, and garden spaces, boosting local businesses. Increased foot traffic and longer stays stimulates the tourism industry, benefiting the community.

Property Values

The development of well-maintained, attractive public spaces enhances community life, and can lead to a rise in property values. Proximity to parks, cultural amenities, and inclusive environments is often seen as a desirable feature for homeowners.

4.3 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

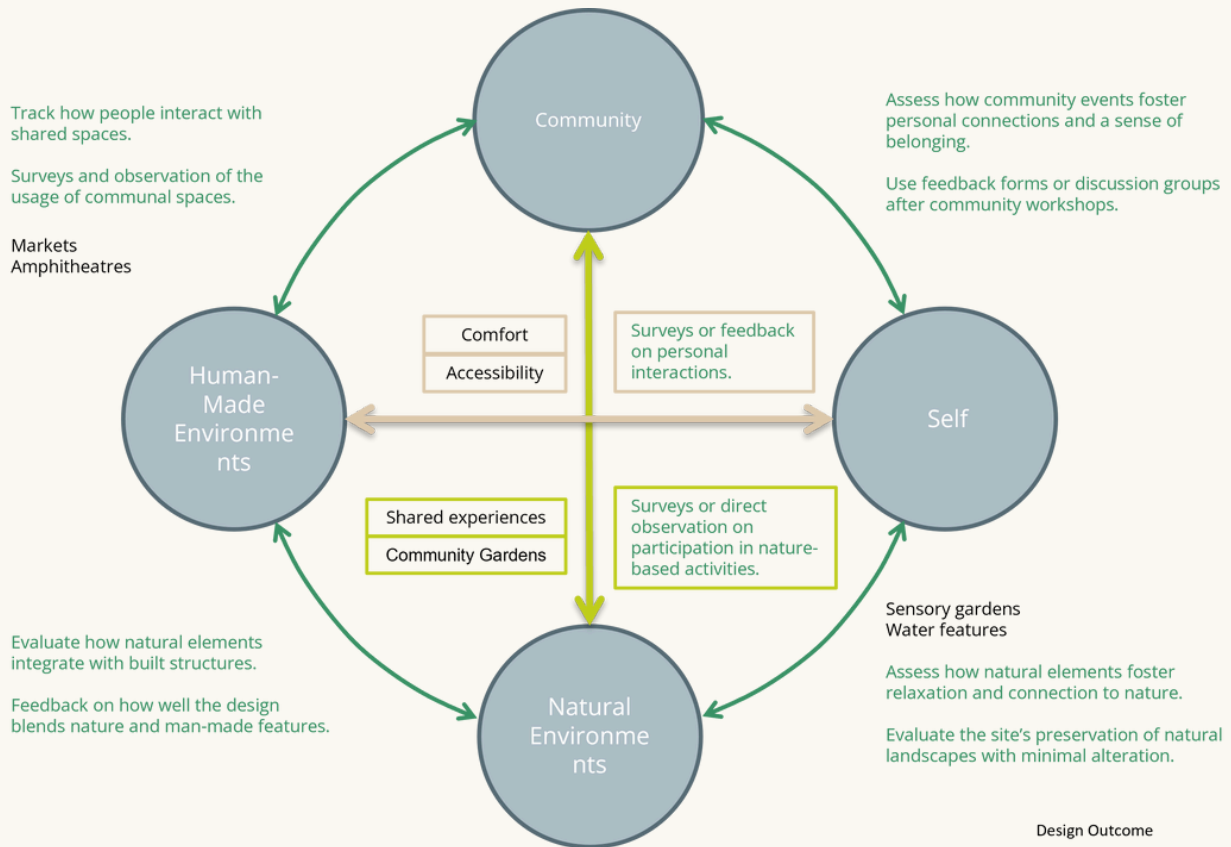


Figure 13. Evaluation Framework based on Place Agency's Place Diagram

Self and Human-Made Environments:

Human-made equipment will be a catalyst for individuals to interact with nature. Community gardens would encourage people to show care to the environment, and to understand the importance of including natural spaces within human-made environments. We will utilise on-site surveys that can be accessed by scanning QR codes. Alternatively, staff can hand out forms to gather opinions about changes in attitude towards human-made environments, and provide assistance to people who need help filling out forms.

Community and Human-Made Environments:

Communal spaces are created so that people can participate in community events and socialise, increasing the level of social cohesion and inclusivity. Similar to the evaluation process of self and human-made environments, surveys and forms would include questions about how they feel about increasing the sense of community when participating in community events held in Mark's Country Place's community garden and market place (human-made environments).

Community and Self:

Community events allow people to interact with one another in an inclusive space, which creates a sense of community and belonging. A seminar that would be held within the amphitheatre. Staff would prompt discussions with open ended questions to allow community members to voice their experiences on how their sense of community has improved through the interactions with each other. People from outside of Kyneton are encouraged to participate to give their opinions on how they felt about the community of Kyneton. All inputs will then be recorded.

Natural Environments and Man-Made Environment:

Human-made installations are created using local natural materials to ensure it does not impact the environment in terms of carbon footprints when moving materials from their source to the site. The installations are made to respect existing characteristics of the site. The process of installing these equipment would be carefully conducted to do minimal damage and alterations. Similar to the evaluation method in community and self, people will sit at the natural amphitheatre to discuss how they felt about incorporating natural environments into their daily lives in man-made environments.

Self and Natural Environment:

Our site strives to be an inclusive space for everyone to reconnect to nature. The site is designed to encourage revisits, with the goal to relax and escape from the busy lifestyles and develop a sense of biophilia. The site is designed with minimal alterations to natural landscapes and using local materials. Similar to Natural Environments and Man-made environments, seminars with different groups of community members and visitors would take place to examine how the instalments improved their quality of life.

Community and Natural Environment:

Community projects like the community garden and performances would be held so people can socialise in a natural, inclusive and accessible space, and with a common goal of taking care and fostering the natural environment through emotional attachment and social interactions through communal activities such as the daffodil nursery programs, cultural performances and market places. Seminars and surveys examine the benefits of natural environments to the visitors and gather inputs on how the site can be improved. Aboriginal members of the community are encouraged to participate in the consultation and evaluation processes.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Surveys, Questionnaires & Interviews

We will gather feedback from stakeholders in-person by using paper surveys, interviews, post-activity seminars. Digital modes include mobile apps, social media and forums. Questions would be focused on user satisfaction and social impacts of the site. This can help us understand the therapeutic effects and the effectiveness of our project. Changes would be implemented once in every 3 weeks.

Observations & Direct Counts

Observations and direct counts helps in evaluating site usage in terms of visitors, event participation, frequency of usage of facilities would be conducted daily and analyzed at the end of the week. This can help us understand how popular and successful the project is and whether if it is achieving its goal of creating accessible and inclusive nature for all.

Economic Impact Analysis

Quantitative methods are used to assess financial benefits such as business growth, event revenues and saved maintenance costs. This includes cost-benefit analysis and revenue tracking. Detailed financial tracking would be required to determine the feasibility of the project.

Environmental Monitoring

Regular assessments of sustainability efforts, including water management, biodiversity, and the carbon footprint of materials used will be needed. These audits can include physical inspections and data collection via environmental sensors.

INDICATORS

Expected Benefit	What to measure	How to measure
Sustainable Environmental Management	Soil drainage and runoff resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install water flow metres or use soil moisture sensors to monitor drainage and absorption during rainfall events
Community and Cultural Engagement	Carbon footprint reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon calculator to estimate carbon savings
Improving Accessibility and Inclusion	Event attendance and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track frequency of local vendors participation in market and number of visitors at events
	Social connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-event surveys (in person or online through social media) to attendees
Safety and Durability	Availability and Usage of inclusive features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct count on coverage of inclusive facilities • Observation points to monitor how often inclusive facilities are used
	Visitor satisfaction with accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short feedback forms (paper or digital) to visitors about site accessibility
Health and Well-Being	Incidents related to site safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a log of accidents or safety issues reported in playgrounds and high-traffic areas
	Durability of materials and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual inspections of materials to assess wear and repair needs
	Participation in gardening activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record participation numbers or casual counts of garden users during peak hours
	Mental health improvement and stress reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before-and-after surveys for participants, asking about stress levels

Expected Benefit	What to measure	How to measure
Local business development	Vendor participation and market sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the number of local vendors and businesses at markets • Survey on market sales, customer engagement, and business growth
Job Creation	Income generated from events and markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request revenue reports from businesses or use ticket sales to estimate total revenue
Tourism	Employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record number of staff hired in construction and ongoing operational roles • Record employment in industries related (e.g. event catering, performance, retail)
	Regional and international visitors and their spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey to visitors about where they're from and how often they return • Track related event and market revenue • Collect data from local accommodations and tourism-related industries
Property Value	Change in property values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data from local real estate agencies or government records to track changes • Compare pre-project and post-project data

4.4 POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION STRATEGIES

01

The design of the site would not appeal to every opinion or align with every vision in the community.

We ensure that we are able to convince the community members with different opinions and provide alternatives that resemble their opinions (Darchen et al., 2019) and this would be achieved through thorough consultation so that we can gather information on outcomes people wanted. We will also be working closely with the residents living close to the site to ensure they are aware of the changes, and to negotiate measures so that it will not affect their quality of life.



Diverse community preferences



Potential noise disturbances



Security risks during construction and operational hours



Risk of injuries



Sudden changes

02

Potential noise disturbances impacting neighboring properties.

During construction and operational events, noise levels may exceed acceptable limits, potentially disturbing nearby residents and businesses. To mitigate, noise control measures will be implemented, such as limiting work hours, using quieter machinery, and installing sound barriers. We hope to maintain communication with neighbours to address concerns and provide updates.

03

Ensuring staff are trained and have close ties with the hospital nearby so that anyone who gets hurt can get there quickly.

We will equip the site with first aid equipment and staff would be trained to conduct first aid before emergency vehicles arrive.

Ensure roads are clear for emergency vehicles and to have more than one entrance/exit to ensure efficiency of rescues and evacuation.

Equipping the site with more than one type of fire extinguishing materials and equipment; holding frequent drills to anticipate changes in environment like fires, floods and earthquakes. Bug repellents and natural repellants informed by indigenous knowledge will be utilised to ensure the safety of visitors from natural hazards.

04

We will prepare shelters nearby to shelter from hazards.

We will create soundproof shelters to ensure people with sensitive hearing are sheltered when trains are passing and collaborating with PTV to keep track of trains to ensure these people are inside 5 minutes before the train arrives.

Ensuring hazards like sharp edges are covered by protective materials. We will ensure infrastructures are maintained frequently to ensure changes in climate/weather do not damage materials which may impact the safety of the users by means of tripping and falling hazards (Darchen et al., 2019).

4.5 MONITORING STRATEGY

A Governance and Management Plan is crucial for overseeing the project's operations. The creation of a dedicated project management committee, made up of local community representatives, residents, business owners, council members, and other key partners, will provide oversight and guide long-term strategic directions.

Community ownership at Mark's Country Place is centred on fostering place agency, where locals actively shape and influence their environment. **Stakeholder Involvement** will be promoted through regular consultations, public feedback sessions, and creating opportunities for locals to participate in volunteer programs. These initiatives will strengthen the bond between the community and Mark's Country Place, encouraging ongoing support and care for the site. As community members are cultivating a shared commitment.

Regular maintenance and upkeep will ensure the durability of the space. Preventive maintenance plans will include inspections of infrastructure to reduce the need for expensive repairs. **Regular data collection and reporting** will help track the site's progress in achieving its goals, allowing adjustments when needed. A schedule of monthly or quarterly data collection, using visitor counts, financial records, surveys, and environmental assessments, will ensure a clear picture of the site's economic, social, and environmental impact. **Digital placemaking** can be helpful to create a feedback platform where community members can provide real-time feedback, report issues, suggest improvements and provide feedback on what events they wanted to see or wanted to lead.

4.5 PRECEDENT STUDIES

Woodland park sensory garden // Seattle, WA

The Seattle Sensory Garden, located adjacent to the Woodland Park Zoo, aims to provide an inclusive and engaging environment for people of all ages and abilities.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

1. Multi-sensory Accommodations for Diverse Needs

- Tactile elements, such as a tactile log wall and keyholes made from recycled trees, allow visually impaired visitors to engage with the space.
- The “cathedral of melodies” with bells, chimes, and rasps, provide auditory stimulation through vibrations and sounds.
- Rainmaker and movement features offer sensory stimulation while providing spaces that are calming and less overwhelming for individuals with autism.

2. Inclusive Design Principles

- Accessible pathways for wheelchair-users and mobility aids allow visitors to navigate the space comfortably.
- The garden aims to educate visitors about how people with different abilities experience the world. This aspect fosters empathy and understanding, contributing to a more inclusive community.



Variability

- The cathedral of melodies provides a dynamic auditory experience, while the Woodland Garden features quiet resting areas that offer a more tranquil experience.
- There are both expansive spaces and smaller, more intimate spaces. This variability allows visitors to choose their preferred type of interaction with the space.
- Utilising space for people to escape the noise and business of towns and larger cities.



Biodiversity

1. Rich Plantings

- Native and sensory plants support local biodiversity and create a habitat that reflects the natural ecosystem.
- Plants with varied textures, colours, and fragrances are selected to engage multiple senses.

2. Sustainable Practices

- The use of recycled trees in the construction of the log wall and keyholes demonstrates a commitment to sustainability, by repurposing materials to reduce carbon footprints.
- By providing a variety of plant species and sensory features, the garden supports diverse forms of life, benefiting both flora and fauna.



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