



OPEN SPACE POLICY

Version 1.3

WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL OPEN SPACE POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The City of Warrnambool is a prominent regional centre located along the south-west coast of Victoria. It is Victoria's largest coastal regional city beyond Port Phillip Bay. The city will experience moderate growth, from a population of 36,150 in 2024 to approximately 45,000 by 2046.

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide Council and the community with a clear direction and priority for open space planning and delivery until 2041.

Open space is essential infrastructure. A high quality, well connected network of open space provides health and wellbeing, environmental and ecological values including habitat for fauna and flora, and economic benefits to a community through activating precincts and activity centres and providing spaces for future events and tourism opportunities. Open space supports not only local residents but also those that work, study, and visit the city.

The city is supported by a significant amount of public open space as well as conservation land and the foreshore which provides access to a diverse range of experiences. As the city continues to grow over the next 15 years the capacity and useability of the existing open space assets, along with additional open space provided through the growth areas will need to be integrated into a high quality and financial sustainable network.

1.2. Scope

The Warrnambool City Council Open Space Policy applies to all open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council, within the municipality of Warrnambool. It also applies to private land under agreement or negotiation to become future open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council.

1.3. Definition

Open Space	Public open space is publicly owned and accessible land in which the primary purpose is recreation, leisure, and outdoor enjoyment. It includes parks, gardens, sport reserves, and natural areas.
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2. REFERENCES

2.1. Internal Council Documents

- Warrnambool City Council - Council Plan 2025-2029
- Warrnambool Open Space Contributions Report
- Warrnambool 2040 Community Vision
- Asset Management Plan
- Warrnambool City Council – Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029
- Warrnambool Planning Scheme
- Green Warrnambool
- Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025-35

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- Play Space Strategic Framework 2025
- Warrnambool Coastal Management plan 2013
- Warrnambool Foreshore Strategic Framework Plan

2.2. External References

- Plan for Victoria
- Open Space for Everyone 2021
- Guide for Open Space Strategy 2025
- Precinct Structure
- Plan Guidelines: New Communities in Victoria 2021

3. POLICY

3.1. Policy Statement

The open space network protects and enhances the environmental values of Warrnambool while also providing spaces for the community to exercise, build social connection, access education, and relax. The future open space network will be planned and maintained to be adaptable to changing community and climate needs while also using financially sustainable approaches.

3.2. Principles

The Warrnambool Open Space Policy expresses Council's strategic policy in relation to the planning and delivery of open space. The policy helps implement the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy.

It is Council's position that the open space network of Warrnambool should be:

Accessible

- Provide a variety of open spaces that are accessible and inclusive for all residents, regardless of age, ability and culture.
- Ensure that all residents should have at least one open space within walking distance of their home.
- Ensure that in urban areas, 95% of dwellings should be within 400m of open space.
- Ensure that across the whole LGA, 95% of dwellings should be within a 10min of district open space and 20min drive of regional open space.

Adaptable

- Ensure open space is flexible, multi-use and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that is responsive to community needs.

Connected

- Open space corridors and shared trails that improve the connectivity of the network and provide links for walking, cycling and biodiversity movement.

Efficient and sustainable

- Consider adaptability and maintenance in the development and management of open space.

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Diverse

- Provide a variety of experiences and cater for a range of recreational needs.
- 95% of open space land that is over 0.2ha (local open space and above) should have 2 or more functions

Equitable

- Access to open space will be distributed as fairly as possible across the municipality.

Protective of the environment

- Preserve and enhance the biodiversity and environmental values across open space while providing appropriate public access to waterways and coastal environments.

3.3. Objectives and Indicators

To achieve the open space vision, the Strategy is guided by 3 objectives. These objectives include indicators to measure the impact of change over the life of the strategy as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Open space objectives and indicators

Objectives	Indicators of success
Objective 1: To provide an equitable distribution and connection to open space across the city.	95% of dwellings in urban areas are within a 400m walkable catchment of open space
Objective 2: To ensure all open space has a clear purpose and supported by multiple functions.	All open space has a clear function. All open space greater than 0.2ha has a minimum of 2 functions
Objective 3: To provide a financially sustainable, adaptable and resilient open space network that can support future generations	30% tree canopy cover across the open space network

3.4. Open Space - Hierarchy

Council supports the development of open space as set out in Table 2.

The classification of individual open spaces can be found in the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy.

Table 2. Hierarchy of open space

Hierarchy of open space	Size
Regional open space is a municipal destination. Infrastructure provided in regional spaces support longer stay times and typically accommodate substantial infrastructure and facilities that can cater to a large number of people. These spaces cater to users from across Warrnambool and, for some, the wider region. Examples include Lake Pertobe Recreation Reserve, Albert Park Reserve and Victoria Park.	15ha+

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District open space is a destination that services a precinct. They can accommodate different activities and different user groups simultaneously. They are large enough to accommodate formalised sporting functions such as courts and playing fields; however, to include formalised sport, they must be at least 8ha in size. Infrastructure provided on district spaces supports longer stay times. Examples include Botanic Gardens, Brierly Recreation Reserve, Allansford Recreation Reserve, and Dennington Recreation Reserve.	5-15ha
Neighbourhood open space is large enough to accommodate multiple open space functions. In rural settings they may include formalised sports uses (e.g. 1 oval), however they need to be a minimum of 5ha. They are intended to service a catchment of surrounding suburbs for a medium length of stay. Examples include D.W. Jones Oval Reserve, A.H Davidson Oval, Manuka Dr Reserve, and Bushfield Recreation Reserve.	1-5ha
Local open space is intended as walkable locations for immediate residents. They can provide a range of passive open space functions, however, only for short stays. Examples include Witham Park Reserve, Toohey Estate Reserve, Motang Drive Reserve, and Water Tower Reserve.	0.2-1ha
Pocket parks are very small parcels of open space which can contribute to improving amenity and providing 'pockets' of green relief. Due to their size, they have limited functions and therefore require limited infrastructure. Pocket parks should not be prioritised as new open space due to the limitations on their use, rather they should only be delivered to fill accessibility gaps or increase greening in urban areas. Examples include Iona Avenue Reserve, Boronia Court, Mechanics Institute Park and Shrader Park.	0.2 ha and under

3.5 Functions on Open Space

Functions on open space refers to the purposes and activities for which the land is developed and managed. To meet the diverse needs of the community multi-functional spaces (more than one function) should be provided on all local open space and higher order open space. The allocation of functions also ensures that the role of the open space is clear along with the supporting infrastructure required e.g. sport the civic, nature, linkage, events, play, social, story, art and education, vistas and dog walking.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1. Owner

Director of City Futures

4.2. Review

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The Director of City Futures will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after its formulation or after the last review.

4.3. Compliance Responsibility

Executive Management Team

- The Chief Executive and Directors are responsible for ensuring Managers, Supervisors, and Employees under their control comply with the actions detailed in this policy.

Managers and Supervisors

- Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Employees under their direct control comply with the actions detailed in this policy (and related procedures).
- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for this policy.
- Ensure any revised or newly developed policies/procedures are communicated appropriately to all relevant staff.

4.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights Act 2007*.

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of its employees.

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