

KNOB RESERVE MASTERPLAN

DRAFT MASTERPLAN REPORT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

GLaWAC
NOVEMBER 19 2025
DRAFT

PROJECT #	M24038
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PREPARED BY	FY
APPROVED BY	AM

ASPECT Studios

Acknowledgment of Country

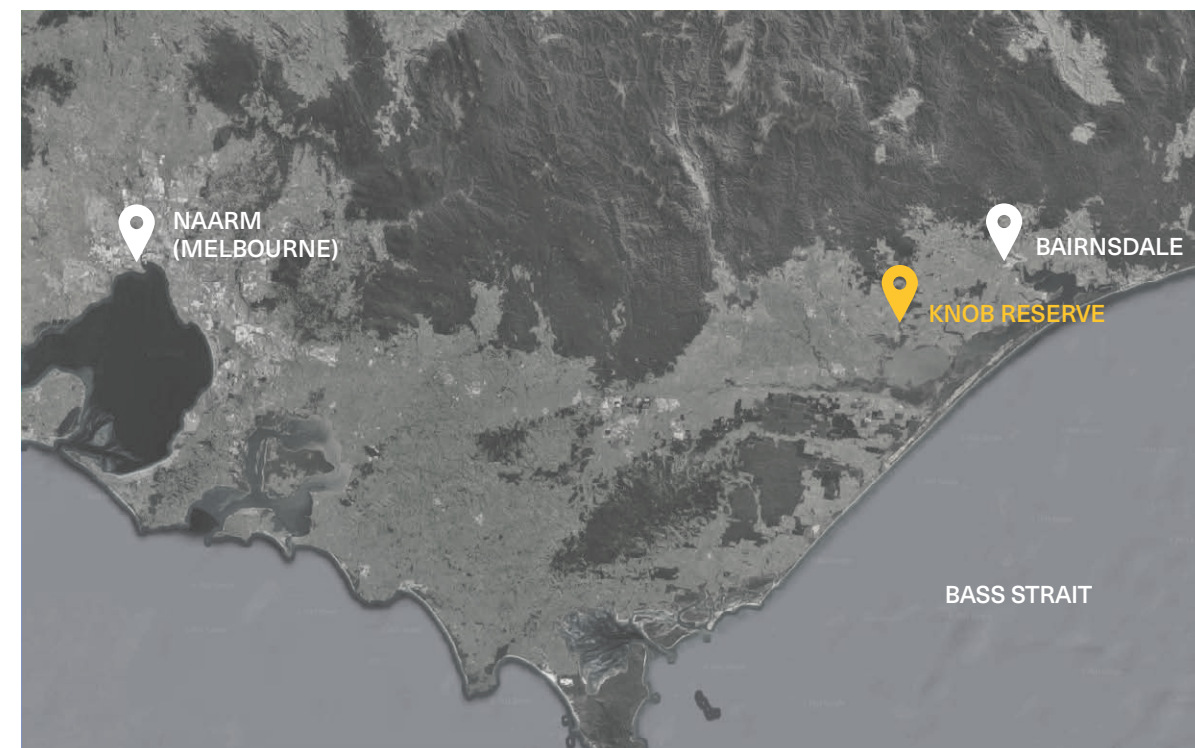
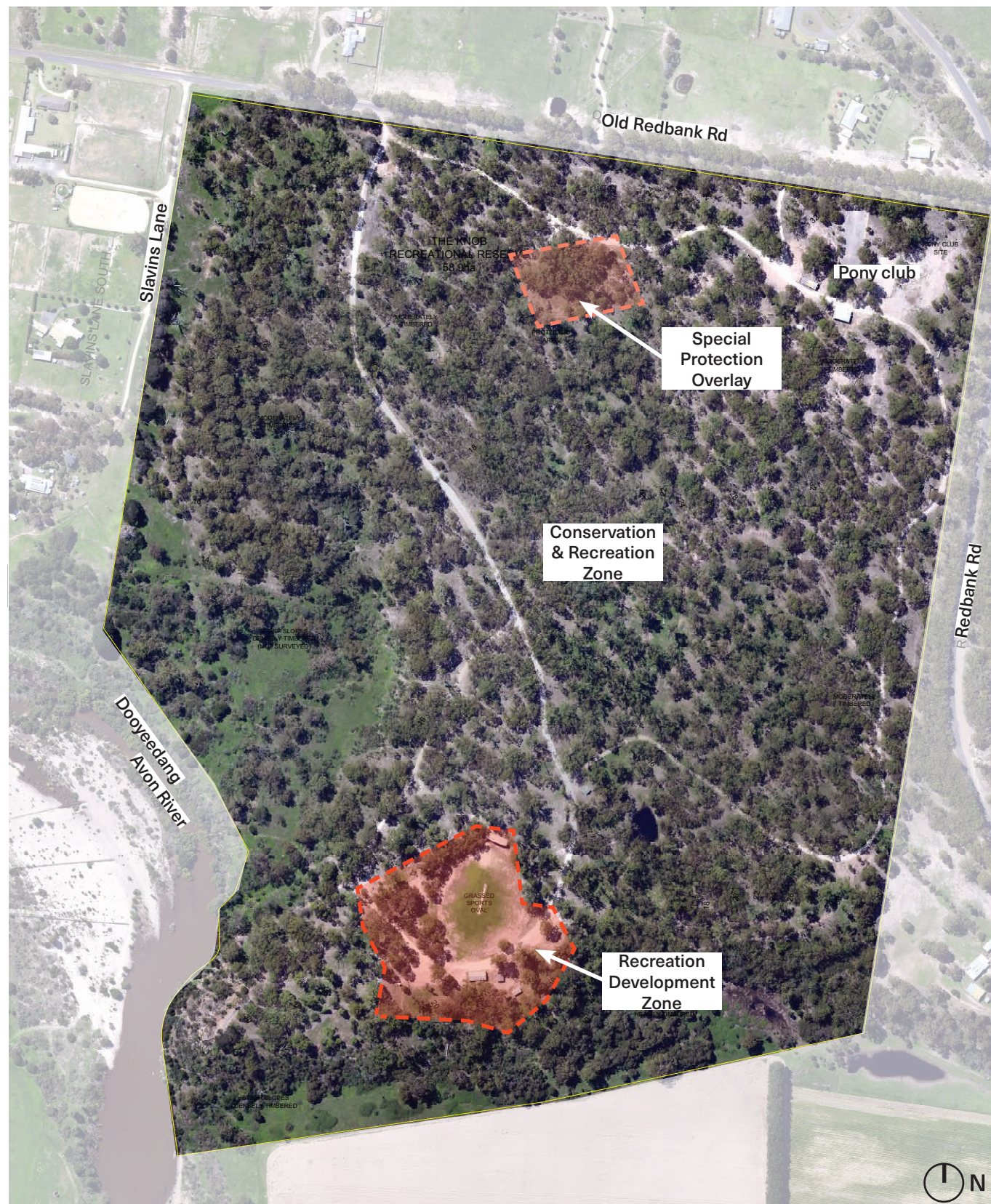
ASPECT Studios respectfully acknowledges the Gunaikurnai People as the Traditional Owners of Country on which Knob Reserve is located. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, sky and community, and their responsibilities in caring for Country.

We deeply appreciate generational knowledge and understanding that is shared with us to aid in the development of this masterplan.

Site Analysis



1.1 Project Understanding



Jack Smith Lake and McGauran's Beach within Victoria

Location

The Knob Reserve is a culturally significant place, it covers 59 hectares and is located 3 km south-east of Stratford, along the Avon River. Traditionally, it served as a central meeting place for the five clans of the Gunaikurnai people, where large gatherings were held for ceremonies, trade, and information exchange. The Reserve contains a high concentration of cultural heritage features, including scar trees, grinding grooves, and rare wooden artefacts such as spears and paddles.

In 2010, The Knob Reserve was the site of the Gunaikurnai Native Title determination. Today, it functions as a public recreation area as a location for cultural events and recreational area for community usage.

Governance

The project team established to guide and oversee development of this plan are the incorporated Committee of Management with representatives from GKTOLMB, GLaWAC, DEECA and Parks Victoria.

Referenced Documents

Gunaikurnai and Victorian Government Joint Management Plan: The Knob Reserve — Brayakaulung Country, 2018, <https://gunaikurnai.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/GKJMP_09_Knob_Reserve.pdf>

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation. "Gunaikurnai Whole-of-Country Plan", July 2015, <<https://gunaikurnai.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Gunaikurnai-Whole-of-Country-Plan-ONLINE.pdf>>

DELWP and Parks Victoria "Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy", Septmeber 2023, <https://fvtoc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/1258_FVTOC_CulturalStrategy_web.pdf>

1.2 Background Information

Gunaikurnai Vision

The Gunaikurnai are the First People of Country, surviving for tens of thousands of years, often against great adversity. They have looked after Country and passed on stories and traditions through countless generations. They continue to survive and thrive, maintaining connection to Country and to ancestors. The future they see is one where Gunaikurnai stands proud and strong, where their people have strong connections to culture and Country, where businesses and relationships are based on solid foundations and where they are self-sufficient and highly respected.

To help work towards this vision, seven strategic goals have been outlined:

1. To have a strong, healthy and happy mob
2. To heal Country
3. To protect and practice culture
4. To be respected as the Traditional Owners of Country
5. To have the right to use, manage and control Country
6. To be economically independent
7. To have a strong focus on learning

(Gunaikurnai Whole-of-Country Plan, GLAWAC, 2015)

Brayakaulung Country Values

Gunaikurnai people have occupied, used and managed coastal land and sea environments for many thousands of years. Their relationship with these cultural landscapes continues, even where the evidence of our previous occupation now lies beneath the ocean.

Gunaikurnai see no distinction between the land and the sea. It is all part of their Country. Their connection to the coastal and marine parts of Country is rarely recognised, so they now need to be explicit about its significance to them.

(Gunaikurnai Whole-of-Country Plan, GLAWAC, 2015)

Current Use

- Occasional cross country school events
- Occasional family Christmas party and events
- NAIDOC week community event (yearly)
- Picnic and BBQ space
- Sports oval - casual, informal use by families, etc
- Bushwalking
- Horse riding (infrequent)
- Trail bike riding (infrequent)

Existing Amenities

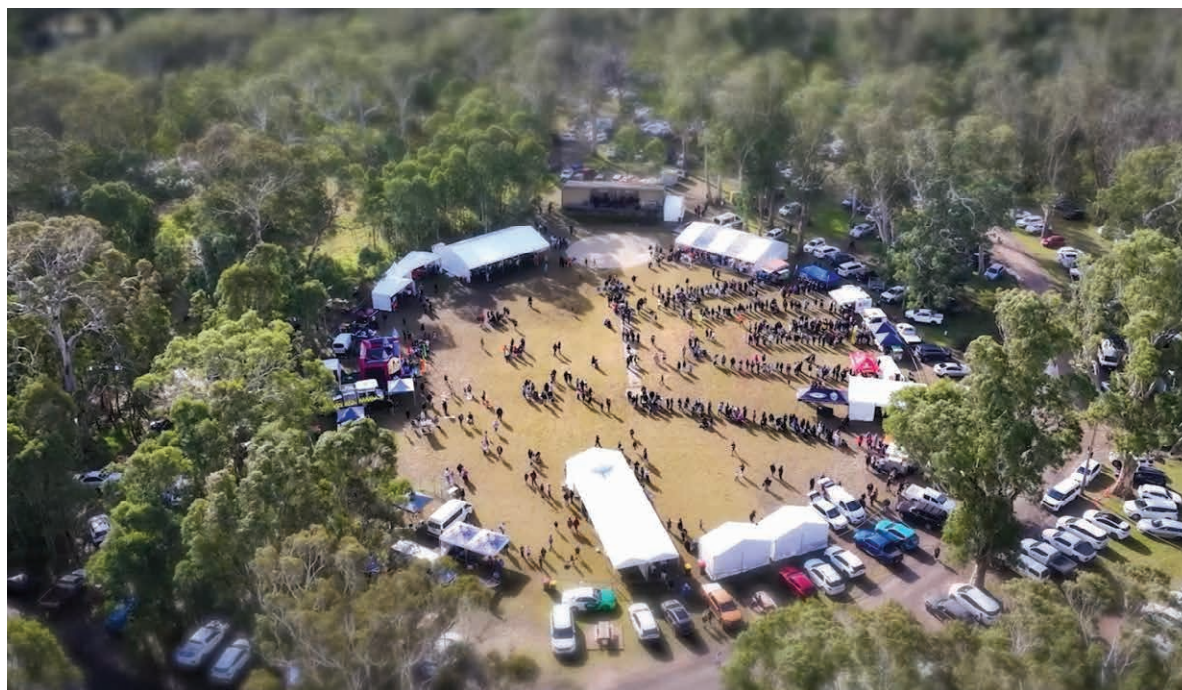
- Open grass area (disused sports oval)
- Event Stage
- BBQ and picnic shelters with fireplaces
- Water Drinking Points
- DDA compliant Toilets
- Signage and Cultural artefacts
- Some access barriers (gates, fencing, bollards)

Ecological Vegetation Class

- Plains Grassy Woodland
- Flood Riparian Woodland
- Riverine Escarpment Scrub

Planning Zone

- Predominately Conservation and Recreation Zone
- with identified Recreation Development Zone



Aerial Image of NAIDOC Week, GLaWAC 2025, Photo credit: GLaWAC



Scarred Tree at The Knob Reserve



Site visit to develop greater appreciation of The Knob Reserve with Committee of Management, 17 June, 2025

1.3 Purpose



Purpose

The aim of the Masterplan is to create a supported vision for The Knob Reserve. It will provide practical recommendations to guide future design of this significant place, that protects, respects and celebrates the heritage and cultural significance of The Knob Reserve. It will draw on the strong cultural history of the place, its natural qualities and its importance to Gunaikurnai Peoples, locally and regionally.

As outlined in the Joint Management Plan the key drivers for the Knob Reserve focuses on the visibility of Gunaikurnai cultural connection with the reserve, increased connection/ access, improved visitor facilities and protection of Indigenous culture and history.

It will also focus on the increased role and attraction of the reserve for regional tourism as part of the Bataluk Cultural Trail. The creation of this masterplan will serve the local community, but equally it will be seen as a project that prioritises the protection of the cultural landscape and provide guidance for regenerating this important natural setting, whilst establishing stronger biodiversity and habitat links for the surrounding landscapes.

Whilst the masterplan is for the whole of The Knob Reserve a particular focus is for the Recreation Development Zone, identified on the next page.

Key usage

The Knob Reserve supports both everyday recreation and large community events. Day-to-day use typically involves small groups visiting for recreation, picnics, barbecues, and bushwalking, with family gatherings being particularly common in the lead-up to Christmas.

The reserve also accommodates larger groups hosting occasional organised activities such as school cross-country events and training sessions.

The most significant event is GLaWAC's annual NAIDOC Community Day, held on the Thursday of NAIDOC Week since the early 2020's. Attendance has increased steadily, with approximately 1,000–1,200 people attending in 2025.

The masterplan needs to respond to these range of uses, providing facilities that support casual, day-to-day use while ensuring the reserve can accommodate significant annual events with appropriate infrastructure whilst continuing to protect the significant cultural heritage of this place.

1.4 Landscape Character and Identity

Ecological Vegetation Classes



Image: The Knob Reserve Joint Management Plan



The reserve is within the Red Gum Plains landscape zone of the Gippsland Plains Bioregion and contains vegetation in a landscape of cleared agricultural land and residential lots and is recognised as having significant biodiversity values.

Five ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) have been identified in the reserve, as well as two unclassified vegetation communities (see Map above). The following three EVCs are significant:

- Plains Grassy Woodland
- Flood Riparian Woodland
- Riverine Escarpment Scrub

(excerpt from *Gunaikurnai and Vic Government Joint Management Plan, GTOLMB, 2018*)

Management Zones and Overlays

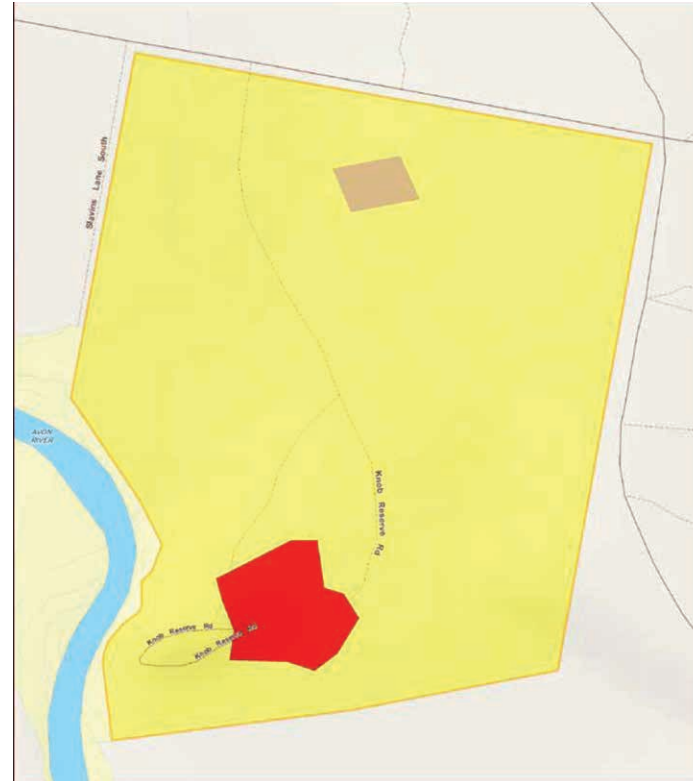


Image: The Knob Reserve Joint Management Plan



Two management zones apply to The Knob Reserve. A Conservation and Recreation Zone covers most of the reserve.

The oval/stage facility area is a Recreation Development Zone. Facilities associated with the pony club in the north-eastern part of the reserve are not included in the Recreation Development Zone and will be authorised by a lease or licence.

A Special Protection Overlay has been applied to a small population of the orchid *Purple Diuris* in the northern part of the reserve, because of its 'vulnerable' conservation status.

Cultural heritage and values in the reserve are currently being surveyed and mapped as part of a GKTOLMB cultural mapping project. The zoning scheme therefore includes provision for a Cultural Values Overlay to be applied in the future.

(excerpt from *Gunaikurnai and Vic Government Joint Management Plan, GTOLMB, 2018*)

Visitor Sites and Facilities

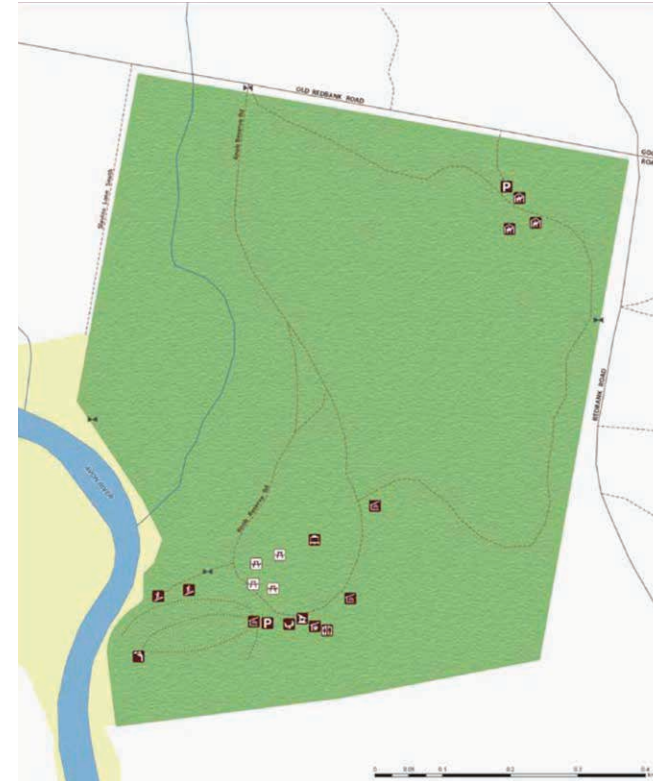


Image: The Knob Reserve Joint Management Plan

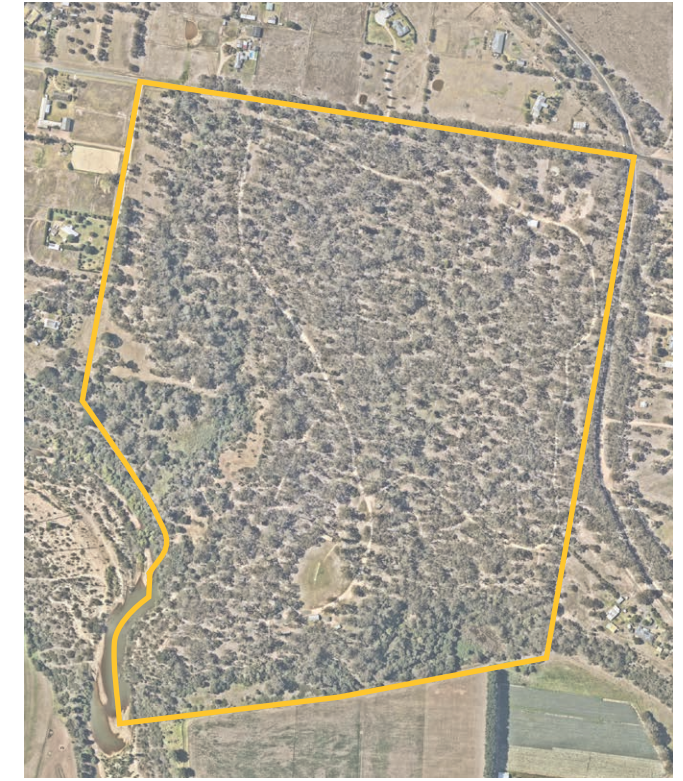


Gunaikurnai people have occupied, used and managed coastal land and sea environments for many thousands of years. Their relationship with these cultural landscapes continues, even where the evidence of our previous occupation now lies beneath the ocean.

Gunaikurnai see no distinction between the land and the sea. It is all part of their Country. Their connection to the coastal and marine parts of Country is rarely recognised, so they now need to be explicit about its significance to them.

(*Gunaikurnai Whole-of-Country Plan, GLAWAC, 2015*)

Aerial Photo

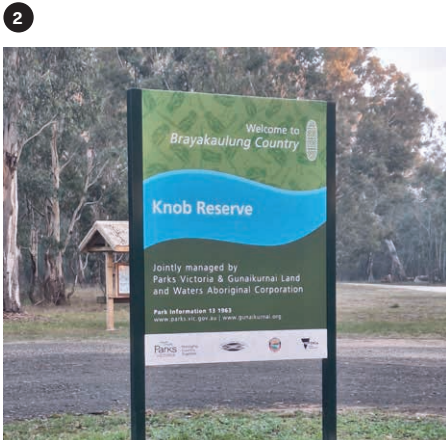


Aerial Photography, taken May 2025, provided by GLaWAC

1.5 Site Conditions - Greater extent of The Knob Reserve



Front Gate does not include signage of location



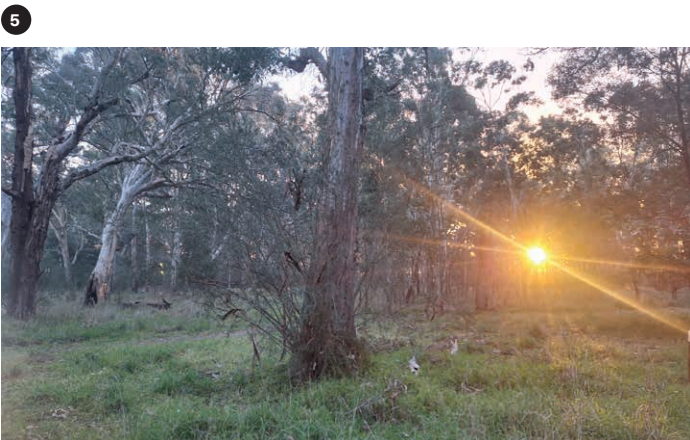
Entrance signage only readable upon entering Knob Reserve



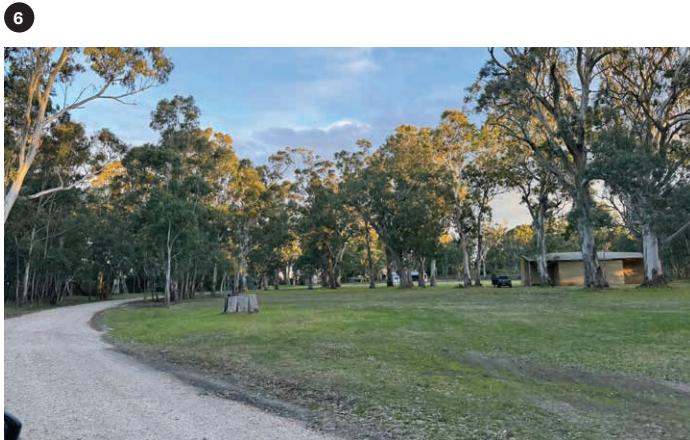
Entrance area Knob Reserve information.



Main access track into Knob Reserve



View of Plains Grassy Woodlands vegetation across much of Knob Reserve



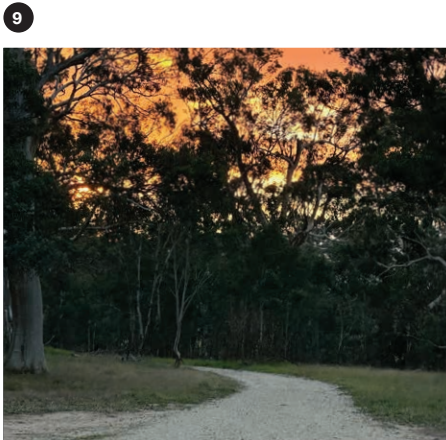
Open grassland area on approach to northern side of stage building with occassional large tree stump



Disused historical police horse drinking trough



Disused water tank



View north from track to Pony Club sheds



Pony Club sheds



Pony Club sheds

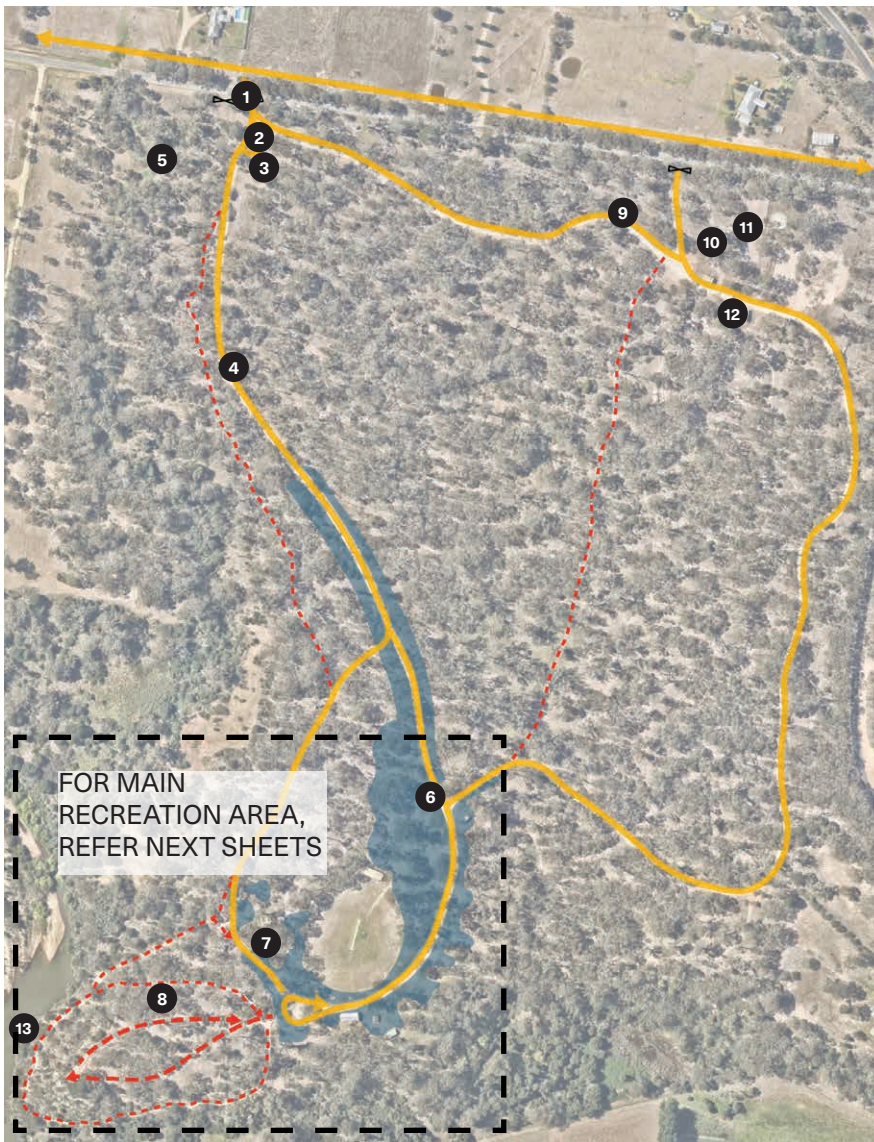


Pony Club sheds



View from Lookout over Avon River

Overall Site Plan



1.6 Site Conditions - Main Recreation Area - general

1



Open grass area previously used as a sports field looking towards the main picnic shelter

2



Sports oval fencing together with dense vegetation surrounds the open grass area

3



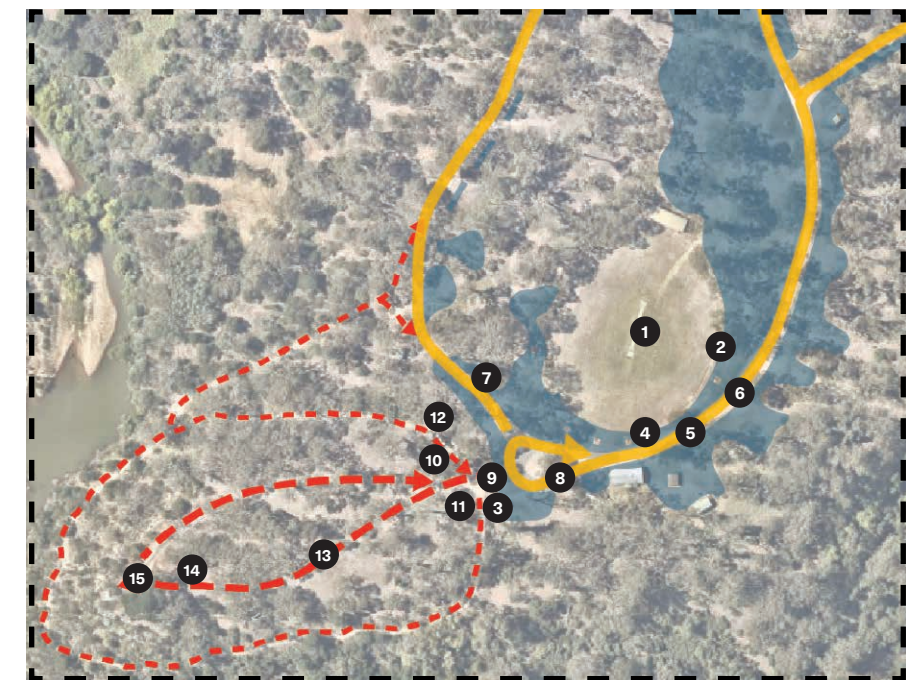
Yarnda (water) Drinking fountain located next to access gate to Lookout. Second drinking fountain located to east side of main picnic shelter

4



General location of regular day parking - south eastern side of open grassed area

Main Recreation Area Site Plan



5



Vehicle track to main picnic shelter

6



Poor drainage to western side of vehicle track to main picnic shelter

7



Culturally significant Scar Tree with timber fencing

8



Vehicle track turning area and visitor access from main picnic shelter to access gate for lookout

9



Separate visitor and maintenance vehicle access gates to lookout

10



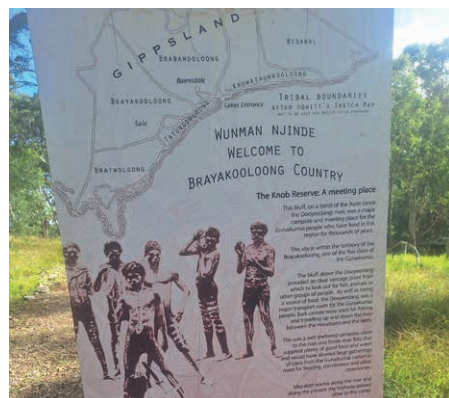
Pond / rain garden treatment inside access gate to lookout

11



Five Gunaikurnai Shields installation with gravel pavement inside access gate to lookout

12



Interpretive signage located on secondary walking track to lookout

13



Broken asphalt and gravel walking and vehicle maintenance track to lookout

14



Broken asphalt and gravel walking and vehicle maintenance track adjacent lookout

15



Lookout boardwalk includes minimal signage

15



Lookout area with orientation dial.

1.7 Site Conditions - Main Recreation Area - Shelters & Picnic Tables

1



Event stage with fall from height risk. Does not provide adequate event acoustics. Power board unable to provide for event requirements

2



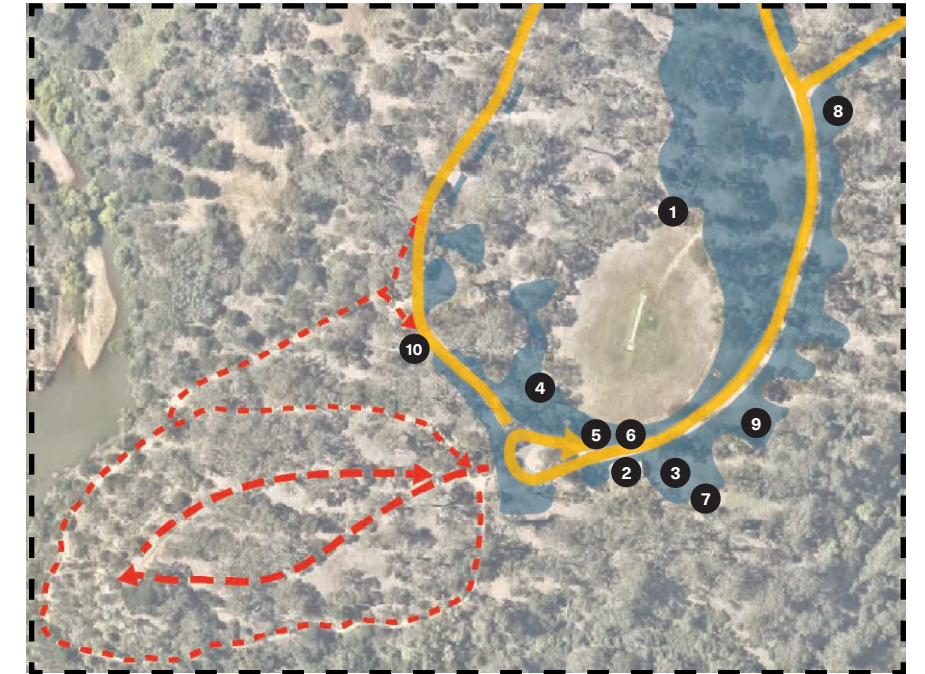
Main shelter with fire pit and water supply showing signs of aging. Requires a structural and services assessment.

2



Internal main shelter facilities of storage room, fireplace, picnic tables.

Main Recreation Area Site Plan



2



Water tank at rear of main shelter

3



BBQ shelter is under utilised. BBQ not in working order.

4



Picnic table and bench (5 total) with cultural artworks on table. Exposed to sun, rain.

5



Picnic table and bench (5 total) with cultural artworks on table. Exposed to sun, rain.

6



Picnic table and bench (5 total) with cultural artworks on table. Exposed to sun, rain.

7



Current toilet block with DDA access in good condition.

8



Picnic shelter in fair condition. Timber screening being used in fireplace

9



Steel framed and clad picnic shelter provides limited visual connection to grass area (main direction of wind)

9



9



Internal picnic facilities. Current access allows cars to enter shelter. No views towards grassed area

10



Picnic shelter

10



Fireplace well used. Small segments from timber screening being used in fireplace

1.8 Site Usage - Large Event - NAIDOC Community Day, 2025

1



Stage with performers. All equipment needs to be brought in

2



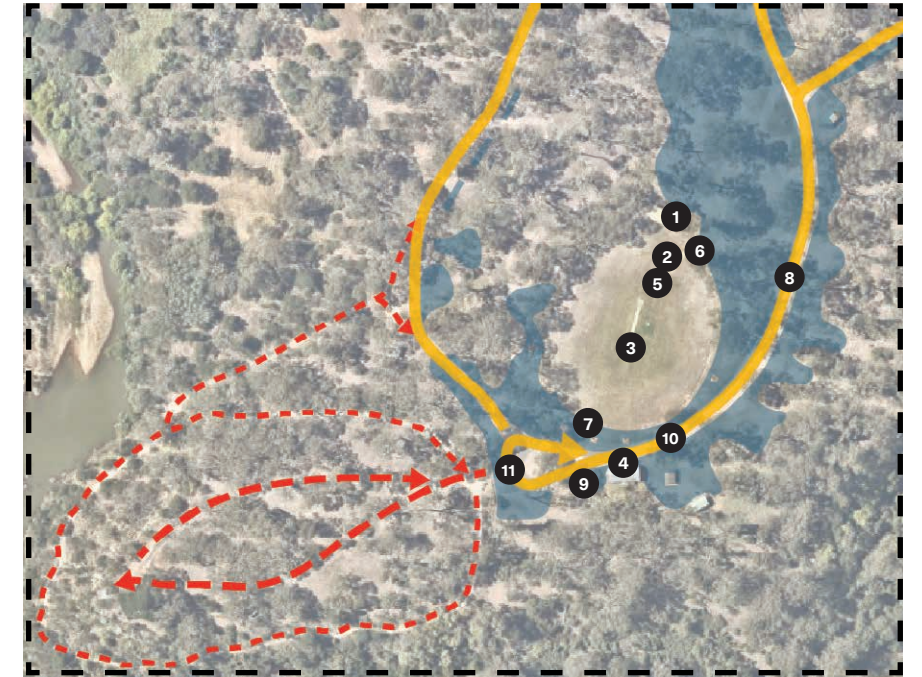
Sand performance space directly in front of stage

3



Aerial photo of NAIDOC Community Day event showing locations of temporary shelters, 2025

Main Recreation Area Site Plan



4



Lineup for BBQ being cooked in main shelter

5



Firepits for warmth on open grass area during event

6



Ambulance in attendance for safety

7



Car parking adjacent oval, between oval and main shelter

8



Car parking adjacent western side of oval by those attending to shelters

9



Car parking along main track, areas working back from open grass area available are utilised

10



Car parking to the north of the stage in open area

11



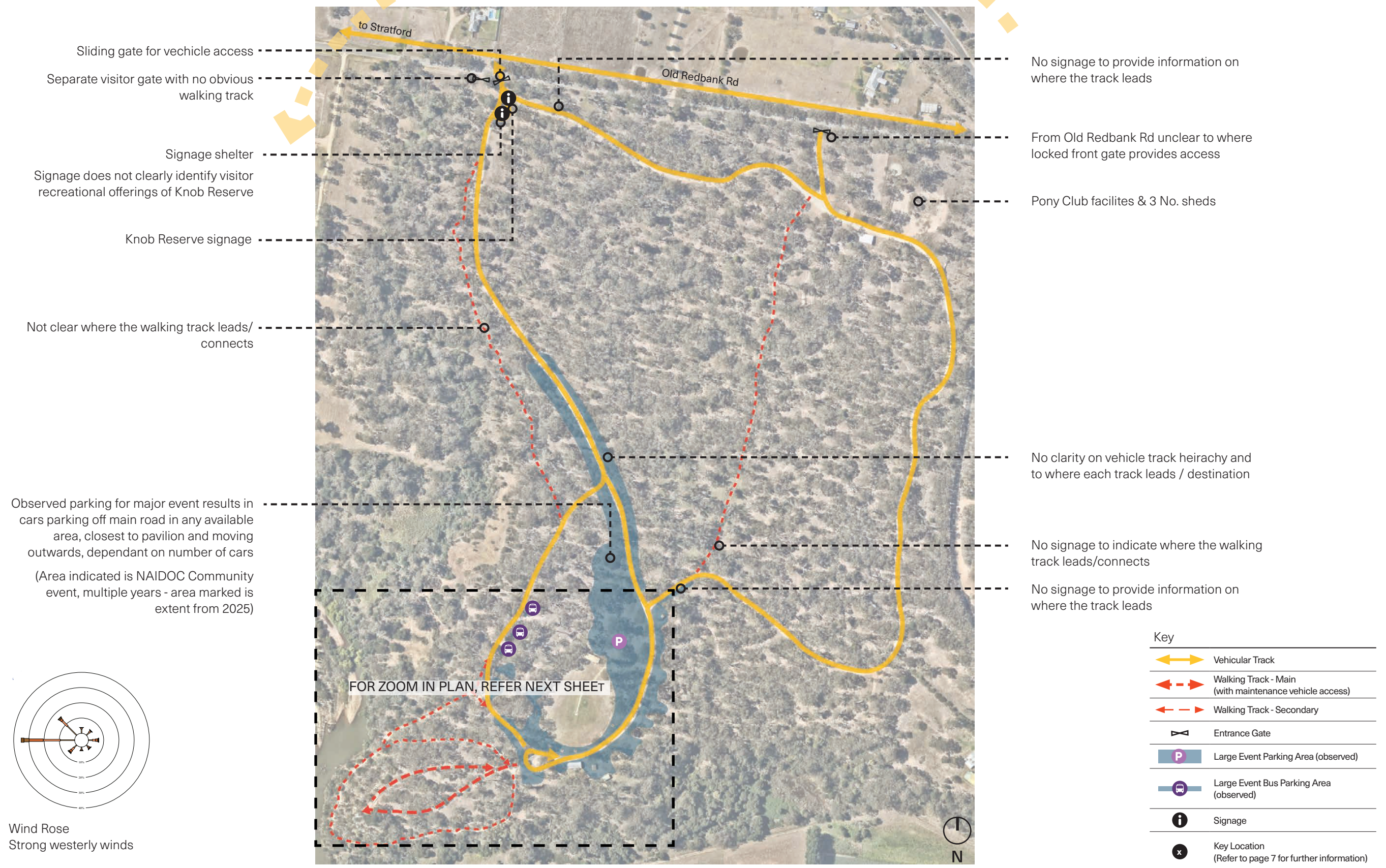
Car parking adjacent eastern side of open lawn area and picnic shelter. Poor drainage reduces parking area availability

12



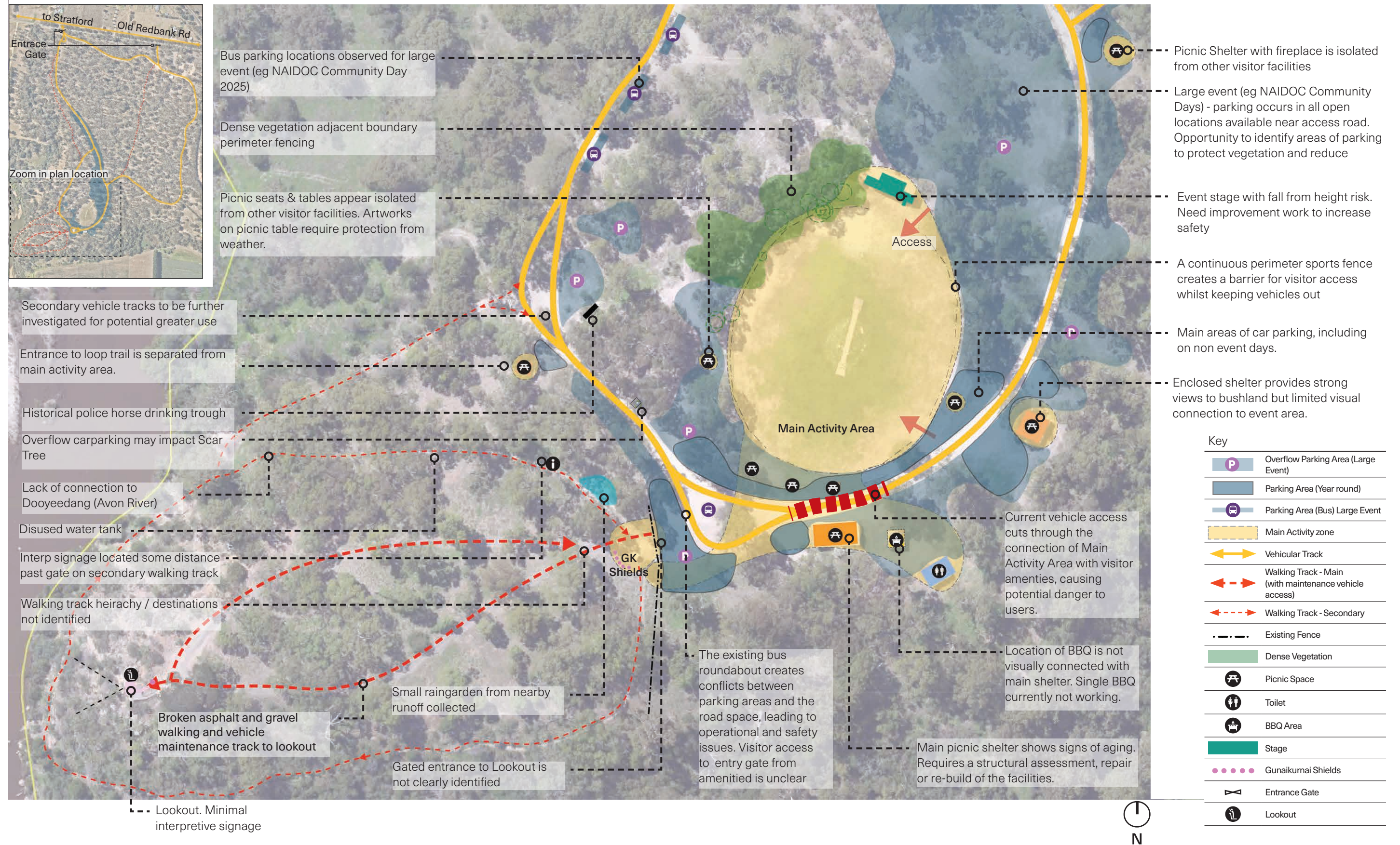
Car parking across turn-around area adjacent fenced access to lookout

1.9 Site Analysis - Greater extent of The Knob Reserve



1.10 Site Analysis - Main Recreation Area

Overall Site Plan



Design Drivers & Opportunities



2.1 Guiding Principles



Recognise and protect cultural values

Ensure no damage or harm to cultural assets. Protect Gunaikurnai cultural values, enable interpretation of cultural history and heritage without drawing undue attention to sensitive cultural sites.



Ecological Protection

Support ecological protection and minimise disruption to existing vegetation.
Encourage caring for Country through a deeper understanding.



Connecting with Country

Provide welcoming, safe, and culturally appropriate amenities. Enable smooth functioning for hosting cultural events of varying scales.
Create a connected and interpretive site experience.



Improve visitor experience

Upgrade facilities to support enjoyment and usability.
Modify vehicle access to create safer, more integrated connections.

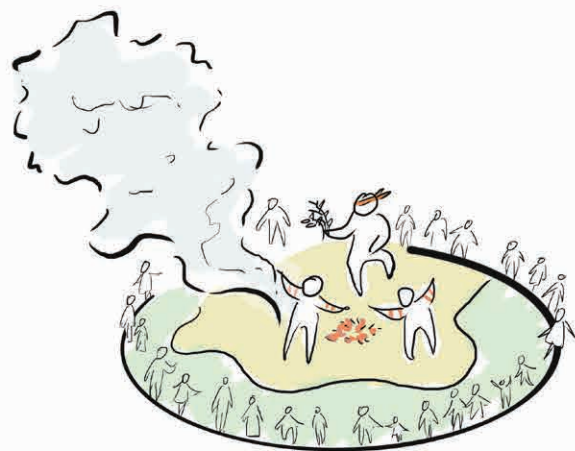


Support sustainable recreation

Address future community needs through reducing impact on the environment by using sustainable materials to support long-term recreation.

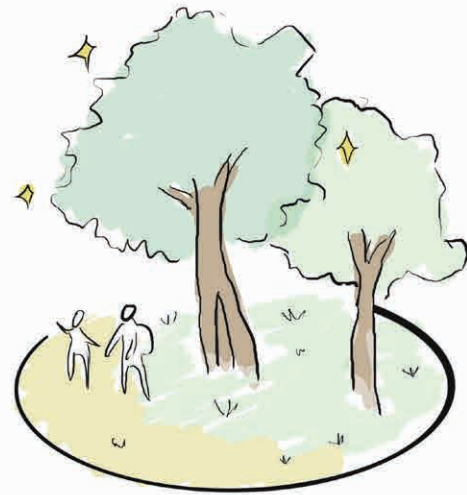
2.2 Guiding Principle Strategies

Recognise and protect cultural values



- Ensure protection of all cultural assets
- Provide interpretation of cultural history and heritage as an opportunity for visitor education

Ecological Protection



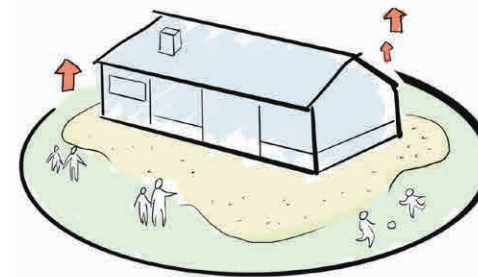
- Prioritise no - damage / harm to the native vegetation of The Knob Reserve

Connecting with Country



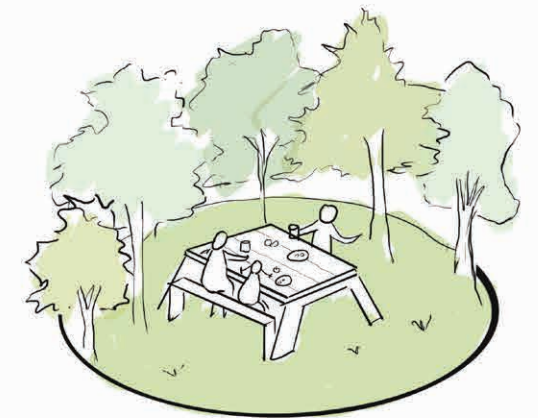
- Provide visitor facilities that are welcoming and safe for all and invite connecting with Country
- Enable opportunity for hosting various scaled cultural events

Improve visitor experience



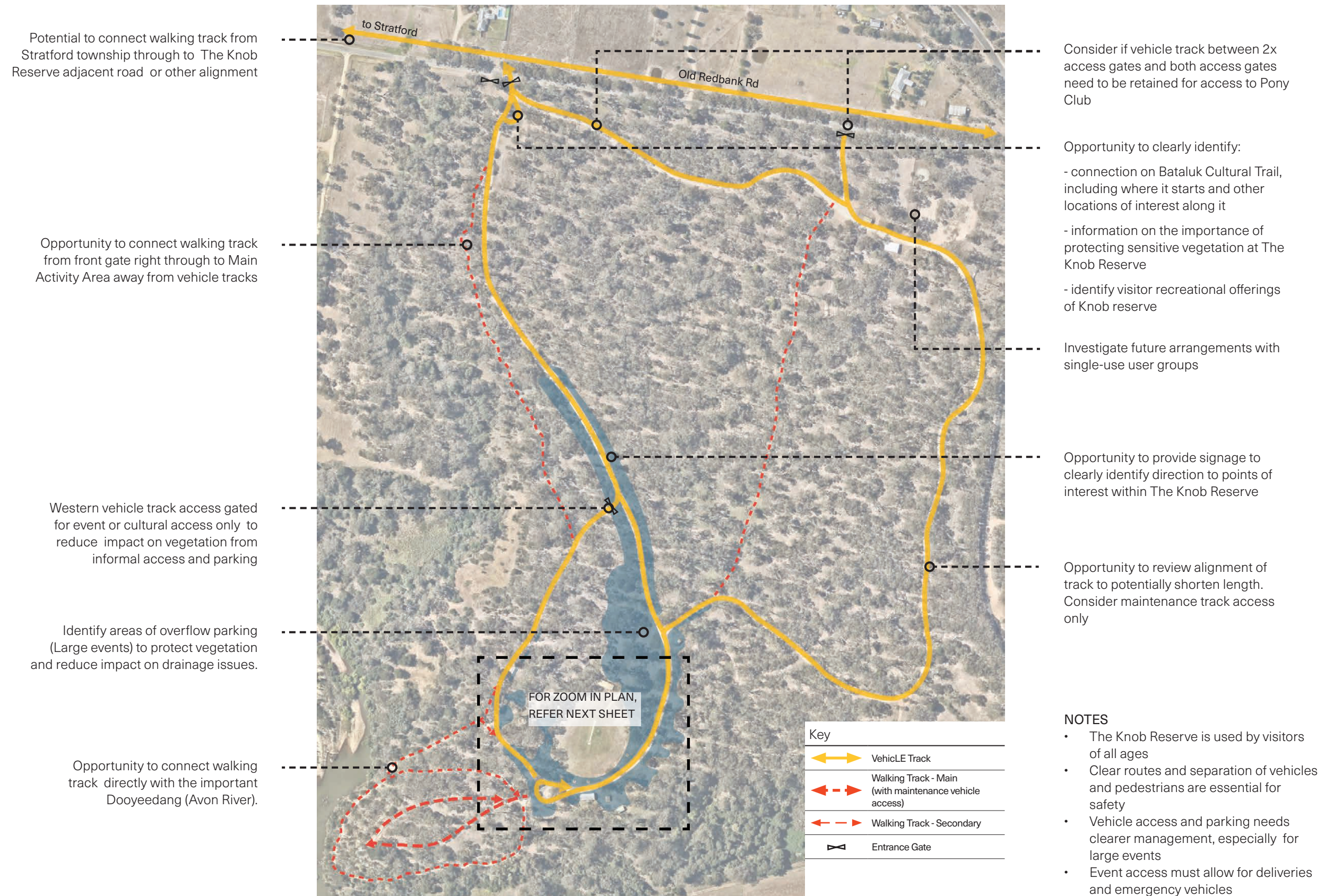
- Review existing facilities for upgrade or replacement to support community activities
- Modify vehicle access to create a safer experience

Support sustainable recreation



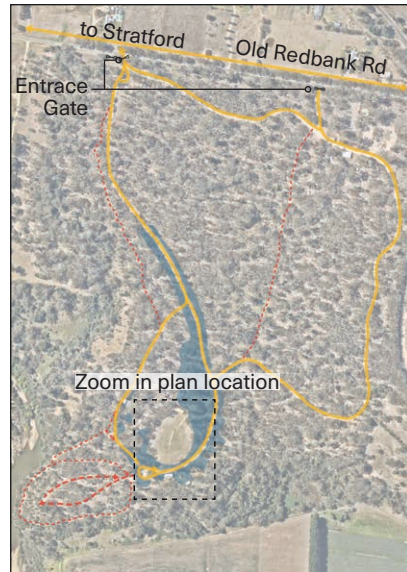
- Consider sustainability of materials used to build visitor facilities

2.3 Site Wide - Opportunities



2.4 Main Recreation Area - Opportunities

Overall Site Plan



Potential large event bus parking location

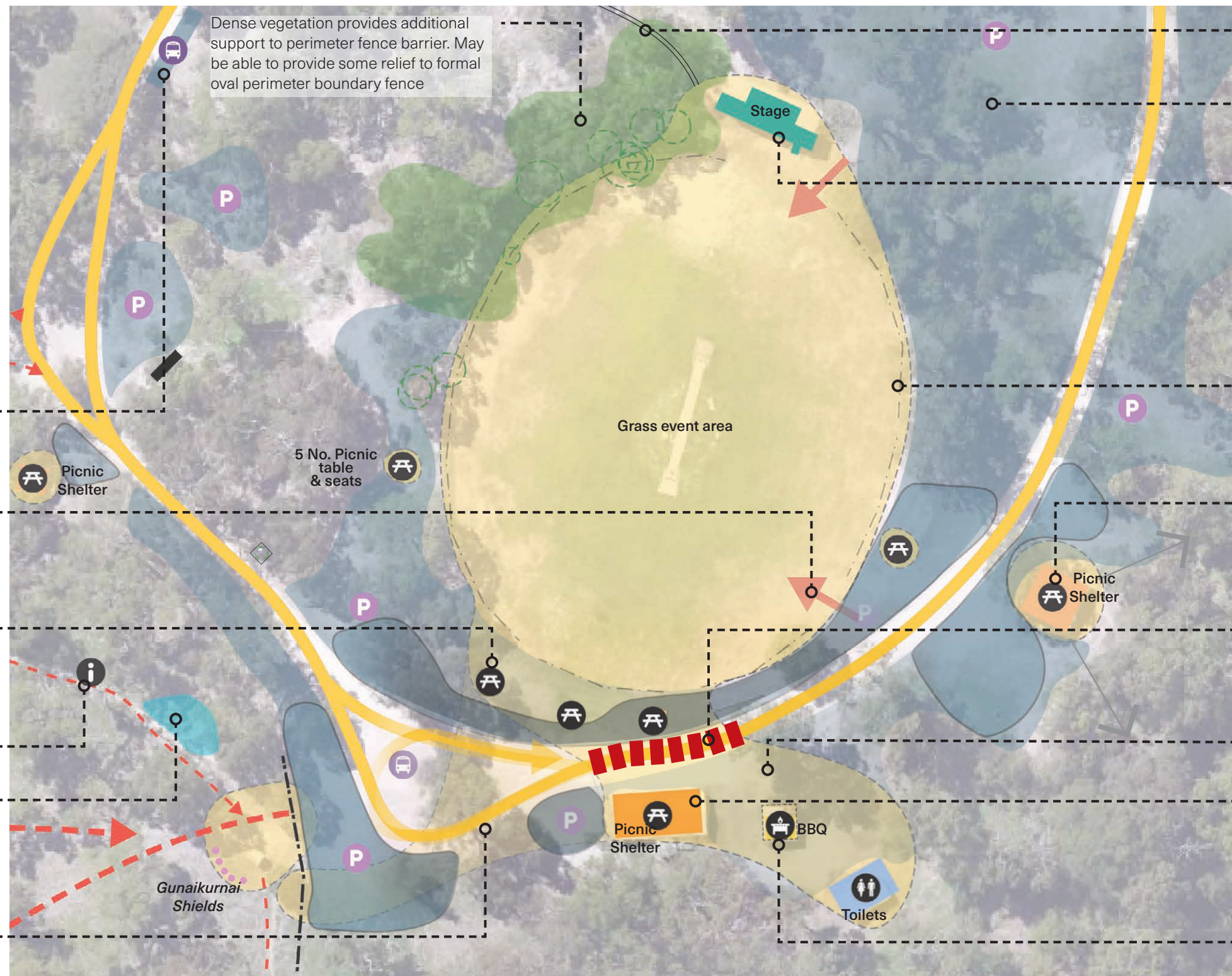
Potential to create controlled access onto grass event area for event setup, emergency access

Potential to relocate picnic seats & tables for greater connection with visitor amenities and install shading for protection.

Relocate Interp signage for greater access and viewing

Raingarden as an interp opportunity of caring for Country

Create defined access, parking and visitor walking track to Lookout entry gates



Opportunity to connect walking track from front gate right through to Main Activity Area away from vehicle tracks

Identify areas of overflow parking (Large events) to protect vegetation and reduce impact on drainage issues.

Refurbish stage and acoustics to maximise greater use. Opportunity for incorporation of artworks to walls.

Address fall from height risk - consider terraced steps or other.

Consider upgrading power supply to cater for large event use.

Potential to modify/create fencing with greater access to improve visitor accessibility whilst maintaining a solid vehicle barrier and protection of grass event area.

Opportunity to partially open up shelter towards event area to enhance visual connection. To maintain wind protection.

Modify vehicle access at Main Activity Area of connection from open grass area to visitor amenities to provide greater safety for all visitors

Consider establishing a Nature Play area for small children

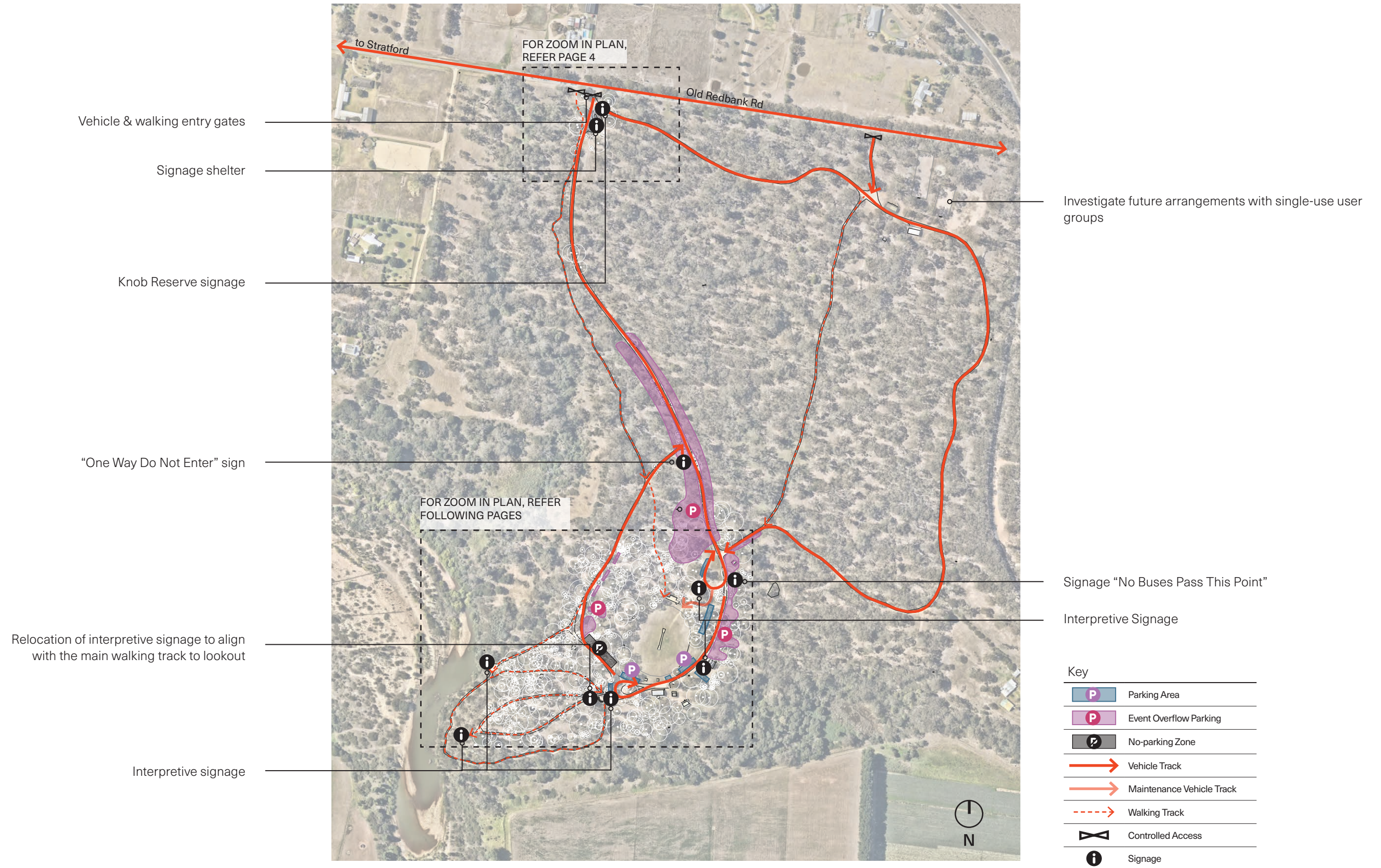
Upgrade/rebuild of picnic shelter could create more user friendly amenity and cohesion with BBQ and other visitor amenities. Could also provide appropriately located storage space.

Upgrade BBQ shelter to include additional BBQ's to cater for multiple groups. Is this the most connected location?

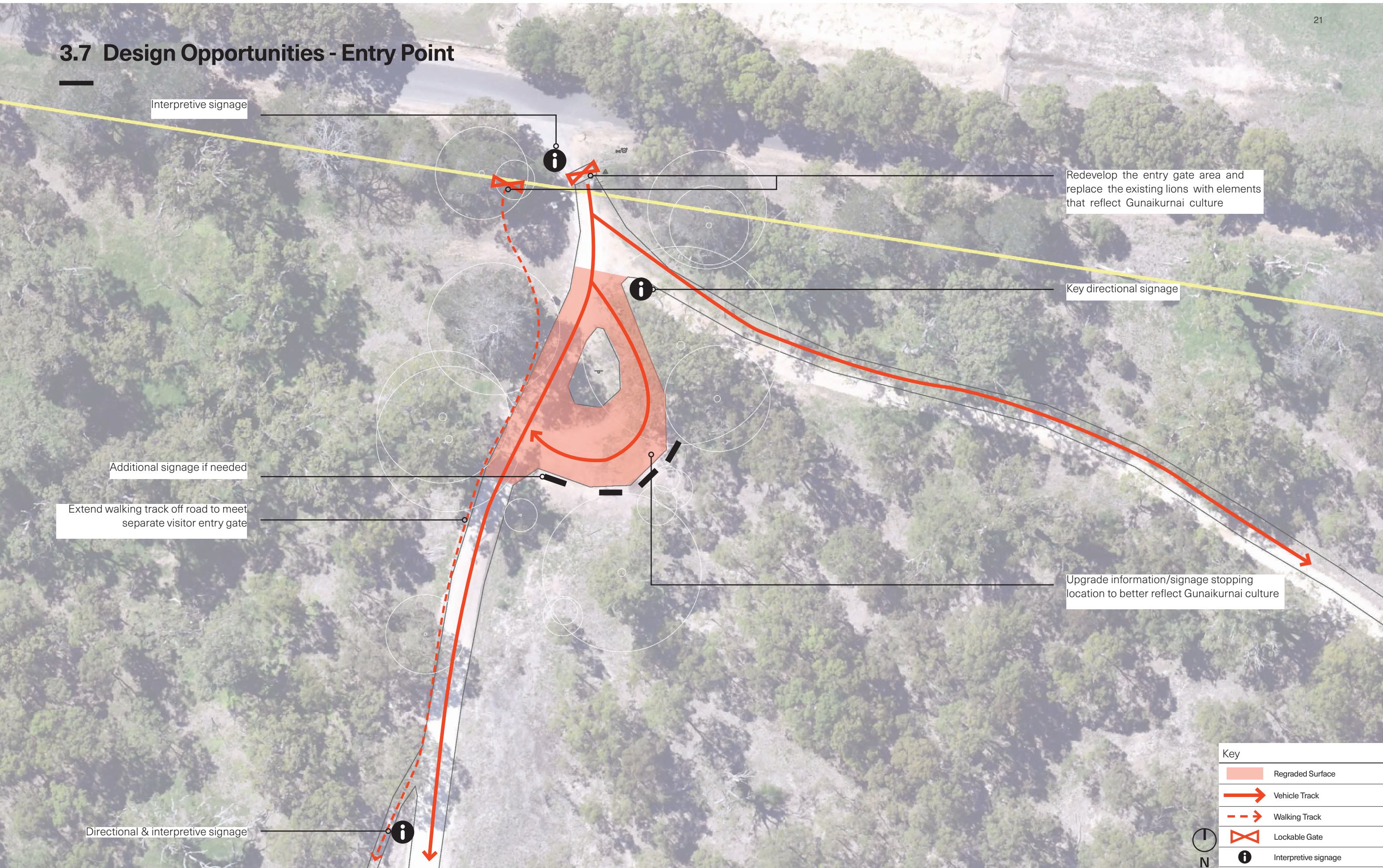
Draft Masterplan options

—

3.6 Draft masterplan - Overall



3.7 Design Opportunities - Entry Point



3.9 Year Round Vehicle & Visitor Access - Option 1

KEY MOVES

1. Access for full sized buses restricted to turning bay and dedicated drop off/parking in close proximity/prior to Stage area prior to main activity area for improved safety and connectivity for visitors between shelter/play/toilet facilities and grass area
2. Maintain year round existing 2-way access along main access track for cars and mini buses to the main activity area including appropriate speed-reducing infrastructure
3. Secondary track access from lookout parking past fenced scar tree to be one way to reduce impact on vegetation, ecology and cultural values

Fence to be modified to allow easier visitor access and retain vehicle barrier

Interpretive signage

Relocate signage to road junction

Interpretive signage at lookout point

See full site plan for proposed walking track alignment

Parking area for bus
(Traffic engineer to confirm area required)

Interpretive signage

Controlled lockable maintenance vehicle secondary access

Signage: NO FULL SIZE BUSES PAST THIS POINT.

Only minibuses, cars, and trailers allowed past this point

Controlled access

Lockable Gate

Grass event area

Key Move 3

Key Move 2

Childrens Nature Play area

Shelter

Toilets

Opportunity to upgrade picnic shelter, creating a shelter that can centre as cultural hub- what design elements are required/desired by GLaWAC to enable educational programs and functions?

Raised surface to slow vehicles- visitor priority/safety

Key	
	Parking Area
	No-parking Zone
	Visitor Priority Zone
	Vehicle Track
	Maintenance Vehicle Track
	Walking Track
	Proposed Bollards
	Sports Field Fencing
	Controlled Access
	Interpretive signage
	Nature Play Area
	Picnic Set / BBQ Set
	Proposed Tree
	Revegetation Area

3.10 Year Round Vehicle & Visitor Access - Option 2

KEY MOVES

1. Access for full sized buses restricted to turning bay and dedicated drop off/parking in close proximity/prior to Stage area prior to main activity area for improved safety and connectivity for visitors between shelter/play/toilet facilities and grass area (same as previous option)
2. Maintain year round 2-way access along main access track for cars and mini buses to the main activity area including appropriate speed-reducing infrastructure. Reduce access to one side of of existing turning circle near lookout to provide safe and more direct visitor access and connection from visitor facilities to lookout
3. Secondary track access from lookout parking past fenced scar tree to be one way to reduce impact on vegetation, ecology and cultural values (same as previous option)

Fence to be modified to allow easier visitor access and retain vehicle barrier

Interpretive signage

Relocate signage to road junction

Interpretive signage at lookout point

See full site plan for proposed walking track alignment

Parking area for bus (Traffic engineer to confirm area required)

Interpretive signage

Controlled lockable maintenance vehicle secondary access

Key Move 1

Signage: NO FULL SIZE BUSES PAST THIS POINT.

Only minibuses, cars, and trailers allowed past this point

Controlled access

Lockable Gate

Key Move 3

Key Move 2

Childrens Nature Play area

Shelter

Toilets

Opportunity to upgrade picnic shelter, creating a shelter that can centre as cultural hub- what design elements are required/desired by GLaWAC to enable educational programs and functions?

Raised surface – visitor priority/safety

Key	
	Parking Area
	No-parking Zone
	Visitor Priority Zone
	Vehicle Track
	Maintenance Vehicle Track
	Walking Track
	Proposed Bollards
	Sports Field Fencing
	Controlled Access
	Interpretive signage
	Nature Play Area
	Picnic Set / BBQ Set
	Proposed Tree
	Revegetation Area

3.11 Year Round Vehicle & Visitor Access - Option 3

KEY MOVES

1. Access for full sized buses restricted to turning bay and dedicated drop off/parking in close proximity/prior to Stage area prior to main activity area for improved safety and connectivity for visitors between shelter/play/toilet facilities and grass area (same as previous option)
2. Maintain year round 2-way access along main access track for cars and mini buses to turning circle adjacent Grass event area.
3. Further car and mini bus access past this point is 1-way and includes appropriate speed-reducing infrastructure past main activity area to provide safer and more connected visitor access between shelter/play/toilet facilities and grass area. Single lane/track vehicle access also provides safer visitor connection from visitor facilities to lookout
4. Secondary track access (past fenced scar tree) continues to be 1-way to reduce impact on vegetation, ecology and cultural values (same as previous option)

Fence to be modified to allow easier visitor access and retain vehicle barrier

Interpretive signage

Relocate signage to road junction

Interpretive signage at lookout point

See full site plan for proposed walking track alignment

Parking area for bus
(Traffic engineer to confirm area required)

Interpretive signage

Controlled lockable maintenance vehicle secondary access

Signage: NO FULL SIZE BUSES PAST THIS POINT.

Only minibuses, cars, and trailers allowed past this point

Controlled access

Grass event area

Childrens Nature Play area

Shelter

Toilets

Opportunity to upgrade picnic shelter, creating a shelter that can centre as cultural hub- what design elements are required/desired by GLaWAC to enable educational programs and functions?

Raised surface – visitor priority/safety

Key	
	Parking Area
	No-parking Zone
	Visitor Priority Zone
	Vehicle Track
	Maintenance Vehicle Track
	Walking Track
	Proposed Bollards
	Sports Field Fencing
	Controlled Access
	Interpretive signage
	Nature Play Area
	Picnic Set / BBQ Set
	Proposed Tree
	Revegetation Area

3.13 Large Event (Day) Vehicle Access Restrictions

KEY MOVES

1. Access for full sized buses restricted to turning bay and dedicated drop off/parking in close proximity/prior to Stage area prior to main activity area for improved safety and connectivity for visitors between shelter/play/toilet facilities and grass area (same as previous option)
2. Maintain 2-way access along main access track for cars and mini buses to turning circle adjacent Grass event area. (same as previous option) Contolled vehicle access onto grass event area (vehicles - eg trucks, food vans) at this location
3. Temporary manned vehicle barrier for large event days - vehicle access past this point only for event organisers and staff only (ie GLaWAC, Elders).
4. Event day access past this point is to align with vehicle access option 1,2 or 3 as selected.
5. Secondary track access (past fenced scar tree) continues to be 1-way to reduce impact on vegetation, ecology and cultural values (same as previous option)

Fence to be modified to allow easier visitor access and retain vehicle barrier

Interpretive signage

Relocate signage to road junction

Interpretive signage at lookout point

See full site plan for proposed walking track alignment

Parking area for bus
(Traffic engineer to confirm area required)

Interpretive signage

Controlled lockable maintenance vehicle secondary access

Signage: NO FULL SIZE BUSES PAST THIS POINT.

Only minibuses, cars, and trailers allowed past this point

Controlled access

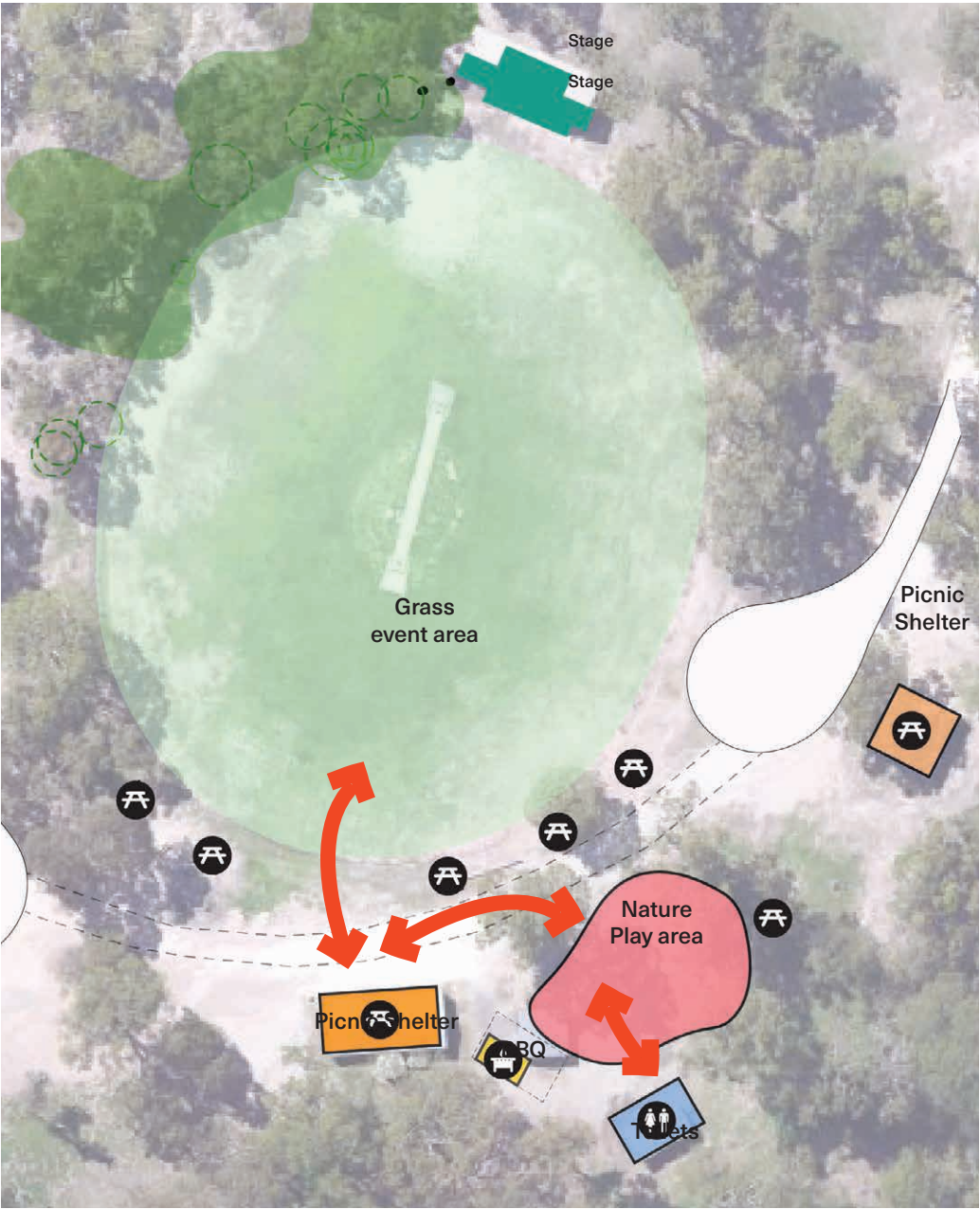
Temporary barrier for large event, Access and parking beyond this point for organisers -GLaWAC, Elders and event staff only

Opportunity to upgrade picnic shelter, creating a shelter that can centre as cultural hub- what design elements are required/desired by GLaWAC to enable educational programs and functions?

Raised surface – visitor priority/safety

Key	
	Parking Area
	No-parking Zone
	Visitor Priority Zone
	Vehicle Track
	Maintenance Vehicle Track
	Walking Track
	Proposed Bollards
	Sports Field Fencing
	Controlled Access
	Interpretive signage
	Nature Play Area
	Picnic Set / BBQ Set
	Proposed Tree
	Revegetation Area

3.15 Draft Masterplan - Main Activity Area - visitor connections

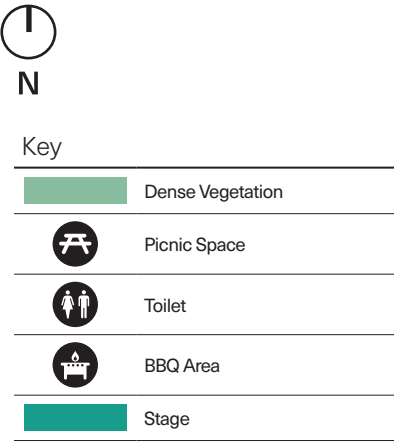


GRASS EVENT AREA — PICNIC SHELTER + BBQ — NATURE PLAY AREA — TOILETS

Key connections:

- Nature Play Area is connected between the Main Picnic Shelter and the Toilets
- Toilets are close to Nature Play Area

Overall Site Plan



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