

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee**Agenda item 6.1****Neighbourhood key issues and City of Melbourne Projects for North Melbourne****14 June 2022****Presenter:** Rushda Halith, Director Community Development**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the North Melbourne neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives. (Refer Attachment 2).
2. On 14 December 2021, Council endorsed Future Melbourne Committee meetings to occur in neighbourhood locations to encourage and support more local residents, businesses, workers and students to participate, experience and engage in Future Melbourne Committee meetings through attending, observing, making a submission and/or asking a public question in a neighbourhood setting.
3. This initiative is part of a neighbourhood approach commenced last year to strengthen how the Council understands and works with different communities across the municipality as we continue to navigate the impacts of COVID-19.
4. The municipality is made up of a broad set of neighbourhoods, each with its own unique characteristics and needs – from densely populated urban environments, such as the central business district, to more residential areas, such as Kensington, Carlton and South Yarra. Using community development practice and a place-based approach, Council seeks to better understand the strengths, needs and priorities of communities to guide its work. Ensuring opportunity of access and participation of diverse voices and views will be a key priority as this approach is embedded this year through neighbourhood plans and projects, developed in partnership with communities.

Key issues

5. North Melbourne is found on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin, along the banks of the Moonee Ponds Creek.
6. As one of the first Victorian towns to be granted municipal status (Town of Hotham), North Melbourne is renowned for its charming village vibe, complete with Victorian-era shopfronts and Robert Hoddle's distinctive wide streetscapes.
7. North Melbourne is a lively, cosmopolitan neighbourhood boasting an eclectic mix of boutique retail, arts, dining and community experiences.
8. It has come a long way from its days as an industrial employment hub for the local livestock precinct, though its landmarks still pay homage to these origins.
9. The Meat Market was once the site of boisterous bartering between butchers and meat traders. It now stages a different kind of theatrics as an important creative hub within the neighbourhood.
10. North Melbourne is also home to Arts House, in the former North Melbourne Town Hall. It stages about 25 new contemporary performance pieces a year, and is a haven for artists and small arts organisations.
11. The North Melbourne Library, built in 1882, has been an important community gathering place for many local residents over the years – as has the Lady Huntingfield Early Learning and Family Services Centre, which has been serving local families for more than 80 years.
12. North Melbourne's streets tell a story of its evolution, featuring both heritage and urban-industrial architecture seamlessly. The area is home to almost 18,000 residents – half of whom were born overseas, with the majority aged between 20 and 34.
13. More than 70 per cent of North Melburnians live in apartments – whether in public housing towers around Boundary Road, in private medium-density complexes, or contemporary warehouse conversions.

14. The neighbourhood is set to undergo further transformation as it welcomes the urban renewal works in Arden and Macaulay.
15. The Arden precinct alone will attract 34,000 local jobs in health, life science, digital technology and education, and see a new train station built as part of the Metro Tunnel project. Macaulay in the north-east promises new streets, a school, enhanced active-transport options and a community centre.
16. Boundary Road and the extension of Macaulay Road will become two vibrant main streets, where locals can look forward to more boutiques, eateries and entertainment.

Recommendation from management

17. That the Future Melbourne Committee notes the overview of the North Melbourne neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 11)
2. North Melbourne: Neighbourhood Highlights and Initiatives (Page 4 of 11)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. Council adopted the schedule of Future Melbourne Committee and Council meetings on 14 December 2021, in accordance with its Governance Rules. This included the locations for the community Future Melbourne Committee meetings, which commence from February until November 2022.

Finance

2. The financial impact associated with the key initiatives outlined in the overview of the North Melbourne Neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives in Attachment 2 are in 2022-23 draft budget.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. Council projects and activities in North Melbourne seek to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of the community.

Stakeholder consultation

5. The holding of meetings in community locations, will increase the community's capacity to experience and participate in the democratic process, in addition to engaging with Councillors informally on a range of matters.

Relation to Council policy

6. This report aligns with the community aspirations identified in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the Governance Rules.

Environmental sustainability

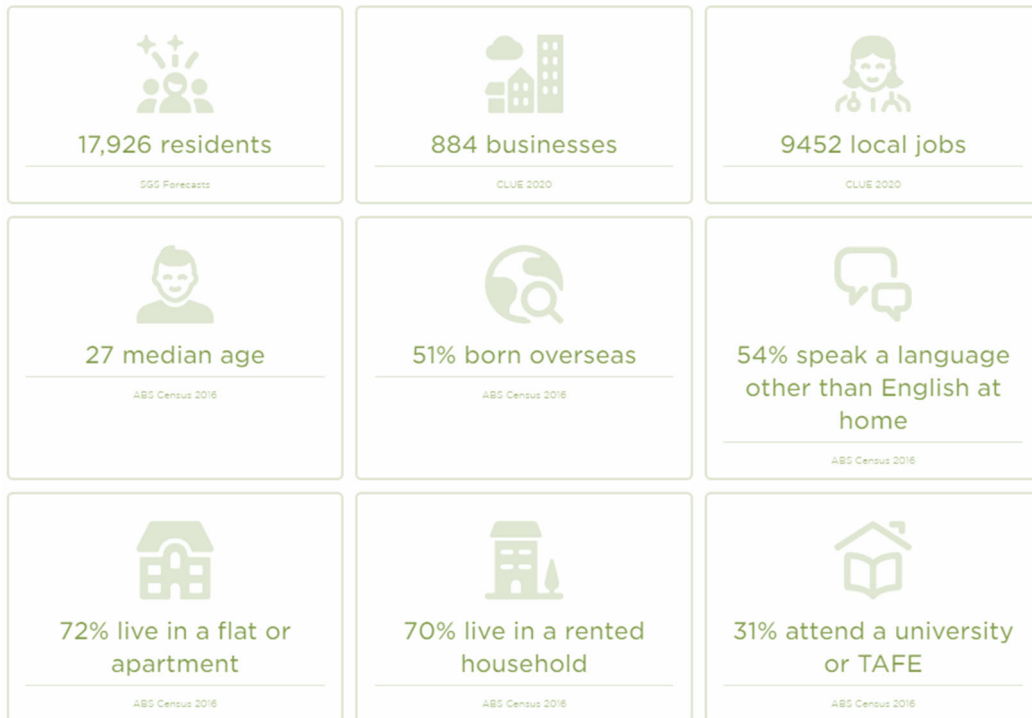
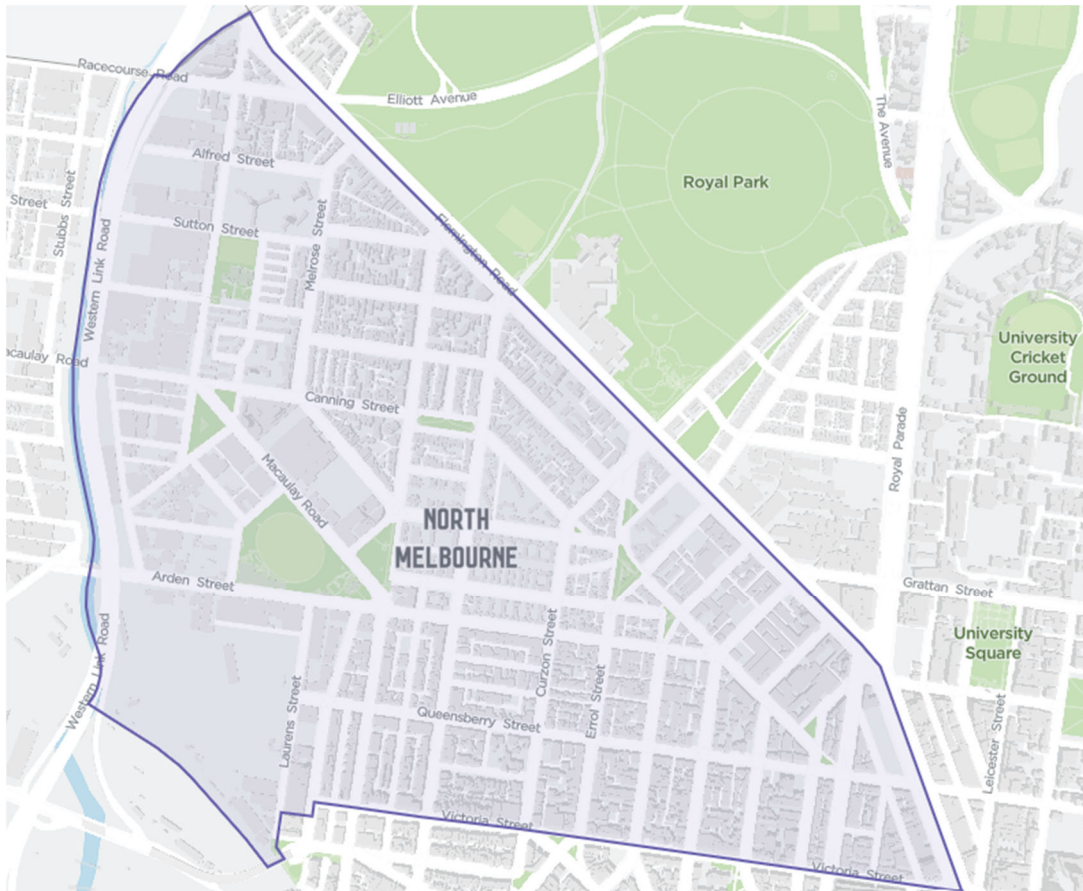
7. Council projects and activities in North Melbourne focus on enhancing both environmental and social sustainability.

North Melbourne:

Neighbourhood Highlights and initiatives



Who lives in North Melbourne?



About North Melbourne

Much of the lower-lying land in North Melbourne is subject to seasonal inundation and riverine overflow from the Moonee Ponds Creek, which was once a chain of expanding and contracting wetland ponds. It is a landscape the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung of the Eastern Kulin Nation have been intrinsically connected to for tens of thousands of years. To Aboriginal people at the time of colonial settlement, the area is believed to have been known as 'Yern-da-ville'. To early European settlers, it was called Hotham, and incorporated today's Parkville, Royal Park and parts of West Melbourne.

From the mid-1800s, the precinct's wide streets saw herds of cattle driven towards a busy abattoir district, where many were employed. Legend suggests, this is also the origin of the Kangaroos footy club's unofficial nickname, 'the shinboners'.

Hotham was one of the first towns in Victoria to be granted municipal status. In 1887, following the completion of the imposing North Melbourne Town Hall and the Metropolitan Meat Market, the borough was renamed North Melbourne Town.

Known today for its heritage architecture, diverse demographics, urban-industrial vibe, cultural institutions and emerging foodie scene, North Melbourne continues to undergo gentrification. Locals cherish North Melbourne's "village feel", with Victorian-era shopfronts, broad streets, sense of quiet, and strong community spirit.

Seen by many as the heart of the neighbourhood, Errol, Queensberry and Victoria Streets form a hub of hospitality, retail and cultural experiences—where you can pick up a library book, post a parcel, dine out, grab some groceries and see a show without venturing beyond the block. The annual Spring Fling Festival is a colourful street party that's been celebrated here with music stages, market stalls, and pet parades for over 40 years.

The area is home to almost 18,000 residents - half of whom were born overseas, and the majority aged between 20 and 34 years. 72% of North Melburnians live in apartments, whether in public housing towers around Boundary Road, in private medium density complexes, or contemporary warehouse conversions. It's a community that values its public spaces and is eager to utilise residential laneways, grassy median strips and reserves to meet their neighbours or relax.

By 2030, North Melbourne is predicted to house 11,000 additional residents and by 2040 its population is forecast to double. The Arden and Macaulay Structure Plans set out a combined vision for the neighbourhood's next evolution.

Located around the new Metro Tunnel train station at the Corner of Laurens and Barwise Street (opening 2025), the Arden precinct will attract 34,000 local jobs in health, life science, digital tech and education. Macaulay, sitting above Arden, in the north-east of the neighbourhood, promises new streets, a new school, enhanced active-transport options, a community centre and the celebration of water in the landscape. Boundary Road and the extension of Macaulay Road will become two vibrant main streets, where locals can look forward to more boutiques, eateries and entertainment.

North Melbourne has an active Resident Association and Business Precinct Association. Among the many not-for-profit organisations based in the neighbourhood are two Neighbourhood Houses, North Melbourne Language and Learning and The Centre, both offering a range of inclusive social, adult education and wellbeing activities for people of all ages and circumstances. The Huddle is North Melbourne Football Club's youth engagement arm, supporting education and employability pathways. The Drum delivers programs and events 'made by young people, for young people', operating out of North Melbourne Community Centre on Buncle Street. The facility is managed on behalf of the City of Melbourne by YMCA, who as of 1 July 2022 will also manage the North Melbourne Recreation Centre and pool on Arden Street.

Council Services

Childcare, Family Services and Health

The City of Melbourne delivers local childcare and integrated kindergarten services at Lady Huntingfield Children's Centre (106 places) and North Melbourne Children's Centre (48 places). At Lady Huntingfield, young families can also book an appointment with Maternal and Child Health nurses, counsellors, and social workers, assisting families with complex issues to overcome practical and emotional challenges. These free Maternal and child Health and Family Services are also available from North Melbourne Community Centre, where there is a dedicated space for facilitated playgroups.

Libraries and community spaces

The popular North Melbourne Library hosts free programs for babies, teens and adults. Members can borrow books, magazines, music and movies, as well as access a huge online catalogue. Anyone can drop-in to use the computers, Wi-Fi and print/copiers.

The Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre (reopening in July 2022) on Melrose Street is a senior citizen's hall with multipurpose activity rooms that are available for regular and casual bookings. A little way down the road is North Melbourne Community Centre, which also has group activity spaces available for hire.

Parks and Public Spaces

North Melbourne enjoys 8.9 hectares of public green space.

The City of Melbourne manages parks at Bedford Street Reserve, Canning Street and Macaulay Road Reserve, Chapman Street Reserve, Courtney Street Reserve, Curzon Street Reserve, Errol Street Reserve, Gardiner Reserve, Leveson Street Reserve, Buncle Street Reserve, and Pleasance Gardens.

It also maintains Clayton Reserve, a large fenced-off dog park, as well as North Melbourne Recreation Reserve dog off-leash area.

Sport and Recreation

North Melbourne Recreation Centre and Outdoor Pool supports participation in sport at all levels, from family to professional. It is also home to North Melbourne Football Club and Fencing Victoria. Offering a gym, group fitness classes, seasonal outdoor pool, swimming lessons, stadium sports and facility hire, approximately 14,000 people clock-up 120,000 visits here per year.

At North Melbourne Community Centre and adjacent Buncle Street Reserve, locals can purchase low-cost gym memberships, participate in programmed soccer and basketball games, or have a casual kick on the outdoor futsal court and grassed sports pitch.

Arts and Culture

Inhabiting the former North Melbourne Town Hall, City of Melbourne manages Arts House providing a contemporary performance space, artist in residence studios, investigation labs, presenting around 25 new works to audiences each year. Meat Market is another important hub for creative development and presentation. This venue attracts diverse programming from circus, theatre and exhibitions to solo visual art shows. It also offers low-rent office space to small arts organisations supporting approximately 60 businesses and community groups per year and around 90 artists and arts organizations.

In 2022, wellness exhibition, Be Mindful Day will be hosted here and open free to the public. Since 2021, Meat Market has also served as YIRRAMBOI Weelam / YIRRAMBOI's home - the base for YIRRAMBOI festival planning and where many of the larger programs are featured.

Key Initiatives

Council work underway in North Melbourne:

- Neighbourhood planning commenced in March 2022, with two months of community consultation. A second stage of consultation will begin later in the year, testing for accuracy and gaps. North Melbourne residents, businesses, workers, students and visitors are encouraged to stay involved:
www.participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/participate-north-melbourne
- Sponsorship of large community-led cultural celebrations and entertainment through the Event Partnership Program and the City Revitalisation Events Grants:
 - Spanish Language Fiesta in George Johnson Lane and Little Errol Street 2022
 - North West Fest in Errol & Queensbury Streets 2022

- Implementation of Council's Affordable Housing Strategy has progressed in 2022 by testing the feasibility of repurposing council-owned space at Curzon Street, North Melbourne in consultation with local residents, businesses and visitors.
- A trial of temporary street trees, understorey planting and bench seating to gauge community support for permanent in-ground landscaping has commenced in Errol Street. The trial is in combination with existing kerb side dining 'parklets' and looks to determine a balance with car parking demand and the need for publicly accessible open space. Local feedback is invited until the end of June: participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/greening-errol.
- Partnership with the Victorian Government to deliver progressive Transport and Amenity Program upgrades for North and West Melbourne and Docklands to mitigate future traffic impacts of the West Gate Tunnel.
- An expanded pocket park at Bedford Street and Courtney Street Reserves will be delivered in early 2023 to serve the neighbourhood and visitors.
- A new public toilet at Gardiner Reserve will be installed early 2023, in-line with strong community support, to meet the growing popularity and accessibility requirements of this much-loved park and playground.
- Local arts production and precinct activation is supported through the Creative Spaces program.
 - As part of the 2022 scheme, Council-owned shopfront 54 Errol Street will host a series of three-month pop-up activations.
 - The first of the free tenancies invites Amber Days' women's wear and Yarn Strong Sista children's gifts to the neighbourhood. With their strong emphasis on sharing culture, the retail space will be open to the public weekdays and weekends, with some after-hours events and activities.
 - Other Aboriginal businesses will also share the space, including Wunyun ancient aroma products and cultural healing services; Monica Karo's womxns music collective; Soul Sista Co, apparel company; and Pawa Catering, a caterer showcasing native ingredients.
- New North Melbourne hospitality venues will be promoted across What's On social media and digital channels (combined audience of 1million+) to focus on:
 - Bespoke content and photography advertising will be published including Sakedokoro Namara, Baguette Studios, Bread Club, Le Bajo Milk Bar, Palette, and Path Coffee businesses.
 - Publicity partnerships with influencers to increase patronage and online engagement by up to 100%.
- A neighbourhood-wide parking and traffic study will be conducted in early 2023 to inform future urban planning.

- An emergency planning exercise will be conducted in late 2022, inviting around 80 representatives from Emergency Management agencies, neighbouring councils, community organisations, government, local residents and businesses to imagine a major flood scenario and strengthen the capacity of North Melbourne to respond and recover.
- The North Melbourne Heritage Review Planning Scheme Amendment (C403) will be presented for public exhibition early 2023, to better protect and celebrate the places and character which are unique to the neighbourhood.
- Organic waste will be diverted from landfill by introducing Food and Organic 'green bin' waste program to households across North Melbourne across 2022-23.
- Integrated Water Management Solutions will be facilitated to support increased greening, reduced flooding and reduced pollution to the bay and Moonee Ponds Creek.

Council investment in North Melbourne 2022-23

New infrastructure investments in North Melbourne this year include around:

- \$120,000 to reduce speed limits
- \$380,000 for cycle infrastructure
- \$490,000 for other green space, infrastructure and cultural projects.

We will invest around \$3.3 million on renewal works in North Melbourne including community facilities roadways, footpaths, flood mitigation, parks, landscape, library collection and property.

We will invest around \$930,000 on maintenance works in North Melbourne including at our community facilities, creative spaces and other property, on pedestrian infrastructure and for urban forest health.

In addition, through the Business Precinct Program, we will invest up to \$90,000 annual funding to North and West Melbourne Business Association for business support and activation initiatives.

City of Melbourne will progress delivery and strategic work for:

Moonee Ponds Creek Strategic Opportunities Plan

The Moonee Pods Creek Strategic Opportunities Plan outlines opportunities to revitalise the creek with a chain of parklands, new open spaces, and wetlands. While the City of Melbourne does not control the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor, it plays an important role,

working with the Victorian Government, neighbouring councils and community groups to ensure that Moonee Ponds Creek meets the needs of the community in the future.

The Plan recommends 12 improvement opportunities for the North Melbourne section of the creek, which runs along the eastern bank from Racecourse Road to Dynon Road. These include pedestrian bridges, an arts trail that celebrate Aboriginal and other local heritage, separated walking and cycling tracks, native revegetation, and water storage and flood management solutions.

North and West Melbourne Urban Forest Precinct Plan

Developed in collaboration with our local community, North and West Melbourne's urban forest is envisioned in the 2012-2024 Plan to be "...alive with colour, diversity and interest. Its shady, layered and connected canopy will provide a retreat for people and wildlife. The varied character of the precinct will be reflected in the character of plantings.

The Plan sets out priority planting areas and tree canopy targets. It identifies specific greening opportunities throughout the precinct, which includes soil improvement works, residential street landscaping and new trees.

Macaulay Structure Plan Refresh

The Macaulay Structure Plan 2021 is a long-term planning document that reimagines a 90 hectare precinct covering parts of North Melbourne and Kensington as a thriving home and workplace for our growing community. Informed by two phases of public consultation, the vision for Macaulay is for a mixed-use, mid-rise neighbourhood that is highly livable, sustainable and prosperous.

Locals can look forward to new public transport routes, schools, community hubs, pocket parks, and high-quality building construction.

Local community and other stakeholders will be consulted through 2022-23 on the redevelopment of North Melbourne Community Centre, to progress concept and design for community service functions and space and recreation options.

Arden Structure Plan

Arden is an urban renewal precinct in North Melbourne, located around the Metro Tunnel's new Arden Station. The proposed Amendment C407 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme, which includes the Arden Structure Plan, sets out the objectives, strategies, spatial layout and planning framework that will guide the precinct's development over the next 30 years. The planning process is led by Victorian Government in consultation with City of Melbourne. It establishes the framework for delivering new buildings, parks, street networks and infrastructure over time. It will also guide government decisions on future infrastructure including, a government primary school, a proposed health institution and future transport investment.