

# **EXISTING CONDITIONS & VISION**

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD VISION**

Investment in the Eco-corridor Neighbourhood will signify the University's commitment to supporting local ecology and flora and fauna diversity.

The main components of the Eco-corridor are the Wildlife Sanctuary, the Central Moat and the area south of Kingsbury Drive. Each component will be treated uniquely, building upon the existing character and strengths of the area.

A network of shared paths will be developed throughout the Eco-corridor, providing much needed connections between Darebin Creek and the neighbourhoods north of the Wildlife Sanctuary.

### **KEY ATTRIBUTES & SUPPORTIVE ELEMENTS**

- Green space accounts for over 30% of the campus.
- The open space facilitates sport, recreation and important local ecologies.
- High Ecological Value of the Moat system.
- Supports regional biodiversity and ecology networks.
- Plays a key role in both local and regional stormwater treatment.

## **BARRIERS TO CHANGE**

- Old and tired materials and finishes within existing outdoor courtyards require upgrading.
- The Moat is disconnected from the Core Campus, visually and physically. It currently acts as an open stormwater drain for the whole campus.
- The facilities within the Wildlife Sanctuary are tired, and in need of upgrading to facilitate effective teaching and research.
- The Wildlife Sanctuary is isolated from Core Campus activities and surrounding neighbourhoods by major road networks and visually intrusive fencing.
- Service roads and access paths will be required across the University Town. This access network will need to be carefully managed to ensure it does not dominate the landscape.





### LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The Eco-corridor traverses the length of the campus, linking Darebin Creek with ecological and biodiversity assets to the north. The water system that runs through the Eco-corridor is currently not well maintained. Weeds have infested the corridor, and the buildings and open spaces 'turn their back' on the water system. The Moat acts as an open stormwater drain for the campus and upstream development. The Moat currently contains significant exotic tree species, such as Willows.

## LANDSCAPE VISION

#### THE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

An outdoor 'living' laboratory for education and research will be created, providing a platform for the pursuit of the University's Research Focus Areas and accommodating archaeology, botany and zoology courses and research activities.

The Wildlife Sanctuary will primarily be a place of research and learning. The facilities will be upgraded to provide quality alternative research laboratories and classrooms, so students can spend more time 'in the field'. Providing access boardwalks and observation platforms will help facilitate learning, while also protecting the existing vegetation.

The Sanctuary is open to the public, and has the opportunity to host community planting days, provide limited indigenous plant sales and retail, enabling local involvement and investment. There will be excellent signage and wayfinding throughout the Sanctuary, providing knowledge and information to all visitors about the range of flora and fauna within the ecosystem.

A consolidation of service roads and storage areas (and their repositioning to more discrete locations) and enhanced fencing treatments will make the Sanctuary an attractive destination. Providing guality amenities for local visitors, and upgrading the nursery entry experience would make this a desirable outing for the community and school groups.

The vision for the area south of Kingsbury Drive is to provide an endemic revegetated and rehabilitated riparian and woodland ecosystem that completes the linkage between the Moat system and Darebin Creek. Importantly, the area will be set aside for offset planting to facilitate development in other areas of the campus and will be a repository for the enhancement of the University's stormwater harvesting, treatment and reuse.

#### THE MOAT

The Moat system and environs will become a public destination within the campus - the Central Parkland. The Moat will have activated edge walks, and will facilitate shared bicycle use. Bridges will connect the Core Campus and the colleges at regular intervals, celebrating moments of art and sculptural form.

The Moat will be an activity spine, linking active and passive recreation areas with hospitality, events, learning areas, and research, employment, retail health, cultural and sporting hubs. Memorable attributes of the existing network will be complemented with new uses. Back of house areas and service road prioritisation will be discouraged. There will be event lawns, public lighting, curated artwork and place interpretation.

Primarily, the Moat will be a place of engagement with water and environment. It will have both formal interactions with the water's edge, and areas where the riparian water corridor is rehabilitated. The Moat presents significant opportunities for habitat, ecology, water quality, learning and landscape experience. The Moat will engage students, staff and the community in the ecological water story of the campus. It will be used to improve the water quality of the stormwater received into the system, and provide a learning/observation function that complements the University's RFA ambitions.

#### SOUTH OF KINGSBURY DRIVE

Existing paths shall be consolidated and upgraded to control movement and provide quality connections between the Darebin Creek Trail and the campus, improving the amenity of the area.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD LANDSCAPE PLAN

### WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

- Upgrade the learning facilities to create opportunities for alternative research laboratories and classrooms within this unique environment.
- Provide access boardwalks and observation platforms to facilitate learning, while also protecting the existing vegetation.
- Consolidate surface materials and visually reduce the impact of service roads, storage areas and fences to improve the visual appeal of the Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Provide quality amenities for visitors and a nursery entry experience to make this an attractive outing for families and school groups.

#### **KEY INITIATIVES**

- Rejuvenate the Wildlife Sanctuary. Upgrade the presence of the Sanctuary within the community, by making the entry more prominent. This will include street signage within surrounding suburbs for access locations, as well as compliant access from car parks and streets.
- Provide a new access points into the Sanctuary from the campus. Facilitate a shared path connection from Darebin Creek, via the Core Campus, and north to the Wildlife Sanctuary.
- 2 Upgrade learning and research facilities, providing alternative classroom environments for students and staff.
- **3** Provide access boardwalks and observation platforms that help to facilitate learning, while also protecting the existing vegetation.
- 4 Consolidate surface materials and visually reduce the impact of service roads, storage areas and fences. Fencing chosen will be sympathetic to its surroundings.

- 5 Provide quality signage and interpretive information so that the site is easily accessible for both students and the local community.
- Create a safe haven for fauna within the Sanctuary. Fauna will be protected and able to be observed and bred depending on research programmes.
- Raise the informal embankments within the Wildlife Sanctuary to assist with flood mitigation downstream through the Moat system.
- 6 Protect the very high significance remnant River Red Gum native vegetation standing within the north-east of the Wildlife Sanctuary and significant individual River Red Gums across the reserve.
- Integrate Plains Grassy Wetland vegetation community within the riparian areas surrounding the wetlands within the Wildlife Sanctuary.
- 7 Enhance the ecological corridor linkage between Gresswell Grange and Darebin Creek through active management of the Plains Grassy Woodland vegetation within the Wildlife Sanctuary management. There are opportunities to enhance ecological value through the implementation of floating macrophyte islands and vegetated swales to improve water quality and manage surface water flow within and downstream of the Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Support research in the areas of revegetation and stream ecology through the installation of macrophyte islands within the Wildlife Sanctuary. There is an opportunity to support the introduction of listed fauna, including fish species, into the Wildlife Sanctuary subject to the installation of appropriate fencing and addressing of overland flow issues.





## NEIGHBOURHOOD LANDSCAPE PLAN

#### THE MOAT

- Enhance the Moat edge conditions by providing well defined shared pathways for pedestrian and bicycle access on both sides of the waterway.
- Create meaningful engagement with water. In areas of the Core Campus, provide an urban interface that allows students and staff to interact with this asset.
- Provide high quality bridge connections across the Moat for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Revegetate the Moat embankments to stabilise the edges and provide high quality habitat, enhancing the amenity and ecological value of the waterway.

#### **KEY INITIATIVES**

- Develop the Moat as the Central Parkland the main activity spine that connects the University Town. This should include shared access paths, cafes, kiosks and interaction with water.
- Provide stronger connections across the water to encourage movement from the Core Campus to the Colleges and beyond to the R&D Park.
- 2 Develop the Core Campus interface to relate to the Moat in a civic manner, providing hard edges that encourage students and activities to occur along the water edge.
- Provide new developments that spill out into the parkland as outdoor seating or dining, ensuring that building facades are activated and engaging.
- 3 Develop primary circulation for cyclists and pedestrians close to the Moat corridor, providing direct connection through the campus from Darebin Creek to northern neighbourhoods. Provide a secondary circulation path along the Moat for strolling.
- Revegetate parts of the Moat network to improve water quality and biodiversity outcomes.





Engagement with water zone 5–15m minimum

Revegetation zone 8–15m minimum

143

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD** VISUALISATION



## THE MOAT



Indicative section location



## UNION BUILDING MOAT INTERFACE



Revegetation zone 8–15m minimum

## NEIGHBOURHOOD LANDSCAPE PLAN

## SOUTH OF KINGSBURY DRIVE

- Connect the Darebin Creek Trail to the University Town by enhancing the current pedestrian and cycle path.
- Return the area to its endemic ecological character through plantings of Plains Grassy Woodland, Creek Grassy Woodland and Stream Bank Shrubland.
- Through the planting of 'hubs' of threatened flora species, establish biohubs to support dispersal and regenerate tracts of habitat and creating the opportunity for species to re-disperse and establish healthy/self-sustaining populations.
- Enhance the quality of Darebin Creek by actively managing access and discouraging development and activities that may cause unacceptable levels of air, noise, soil and water pollution. Provide opportunities for research stations and outdoor classrooms within this unique environment.
- Work with external stakeholders with an interest in the health of Darebin Creek to realise its management objectives through an integrated sub-catchment approach to improving the flow and quality of water entering the watercourse.

### **KEY INITIATIVES**

- 1 Connect the Darebin Creek Trail to the campus and provide bicycle and pedestrian links to the suburbs north and south.
- 2 Improve water quality and manage surface water flow to Darebin Creek through riparian vegetation plantings along the Creek and constructed wetlands and by active management of weeds, litter control and pest species.
- **3** Protect ecologically important old River Red Gums, endangered flora species and create habitat for endangered fauna species within the Offset Area.
- 4 Enhance the ecological value of the area through the implementation of floating macrophyte islands and vegetated swales to improve water quality and manage surface water flow within the constructed wetlands.





The La Trobe Tan (Stage 2)

