



North East Link Project  
GPO Box 4509  
Melbourne VIC 3001

Wednesday 14 July 2020

**RE: NELP Templestowe Road Soccer Fields Master Plan**

To Whom it May Concern,

The **Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA)** is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture. AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. We provide our members with training, recognition, and a community of practice to share knowledge, ideas and action. With our members, we anticipate and develop a leading position on issues of concern in Landscape Architecture. Alongside government and allied professions, we work to improve the design, planning and management of the natural and built environment.

In operation since 1966, AILA represents over 3,500 Landscape Architects and promotes excellence in planning and designing for life outdoors. Committed to designing and creating better spaces in Australia, Landscape Architects have the skills and expertise to improve the nation's liveability through a unique approach to planning issues via innovative integrated solutions. In doing so, Landscape Architects contribute towards better environmental, social, and economic outcomes for all Australians.

AILA (Vic) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the draft Templestowe Road Soccer Fields Master Plan. We do so drawing on [AILA position statements](#), particularly those relating to:

- Climate Positive Design
- Green Infrastructure
- Connection to Country
- Adaptation to the Changing Climate: Building Resilience
- Health Communities – Healthy Living Landscape Solutions

We are pleased to support the Templestowe Road Soccer Fields Master Plan. We note that the Master Plan is consistent with key actions of the draft Yarra River-Bulleen precinct land use framework plan and the Significant Landscape Overlay of the Manningham City Council Planning Scheme. The development of soccer fields with extensive revegetation on the Templestowe Road site is consistent with the proposed land use of open space, recreation and conservation. The development will provide opportunities for passive and active recreation, much needed for healthy communities in Melbourne. Locating active recreation to the south of the site near Templestowe Road will optimise access to the sporting facilities. This location away from the Yarra River will facilitate protection of its floodplain and enhancement of its conservation, cultural and aesthetic values. Although the existence of the power easement is important, it should not be a driver for the site design.



## Key Design Directions

The key design directions seem appropriate. The opportunity exists, though, to broaden the active recreation opportunities beyond soccer. The site offers potential for multiple uses to be designed into the site. The possibility of these other potential uses should be included in the master plan. Additional uses would make the site more accessible and valuable to the community.

We agree with *Direction 1* that flood storage should be retained in the Yarra River. Ideally, this would always be the case but given the location of the site in a developed suburban area, flooding risks must be mitigated. We would encourage the use of green infrastructure to manage such flooding, in order to keep all environmental flow within the river system. Wetlands serve this purpose well, providing habitat, visual amenity, opportunities for passive recreation, etc.

In particular, we commend *Directions 2, 3, 4 and 5* with their emphasis on the value of existing vegetation and the need for revegetation of the site. We agree that the existing riparian floodplain woodland must be protected and enhanced, and that a bushland feel should be extended through the northern part of the site. The existing vegetation patches are an important driver for any design. We would encourage any planting to be able to contribute to wildlife corridors and provide effective habitat. We support the planting of large canopy trees along Templestowe Road, and, importantly, elsewhere on the site as well, to provide various benefits to human users, e.g. visual amenity, shade, and habitat for local fauna.

We support *Direction 6*. The topography of the site presents an opportunity for watching sport. The natural slope can act as an amphitheatre and should be a driver for any design.

*Directions 7 and 8* are important, recognising the value of this landscape to Indigenous communities and of a connection to nature for everyone, regardless of heritage.

*Direction 9* offers guidance for wayfinding. This is always important. We support the design of effective visual cues and signage to guide visitors through the site.

We would encourage more prescriptive language in *Direction 10*. Rather than 'Investigate opportunities for Water Sensitive Urban Design', as a principle, water sensitive urban design should be implemented in the development of the site. Such green infrastructure provides multiple benefits in a landscape in addition to managing stormwater in a sustainable way, such as increasing biodiversity, providing habitat, enhancing visual amenity and contributing to flood mitigation.

We ask that the wording of *Direction 11* be changed from "Minimise fragmentation" to "Prevent fragmentation". Fragmentation of the site will lead to fragmentation of the vegetation. This will cause habitat fragmentation, with negative outcomes for biodiversity.

Access issues, covered by *Directions 12, 13 and 15* are important to facilitate use of the active recreation facilities by all, regardless of physical abilities. Formalising pedestrian connections between Templestowe Road and the Yarra River will enable less physically able park users to reach the riparian zone of the site and manage movement through the more environmentally sensitive areas near the river. Allowing for future connections with nearby parkland or cultural sites will reduce the cost of doing so when the time comes.



*Direction 14* is critical. The visual impact of the soccer facilities must not be detrimental for visitors to the Yarra River near the soccer fields, or visually accessible areas of the river either up or downstream. The visual integrity of the Yarra River as a natural waterway must be maintained.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond. Should you require additional input from AILA, please contact Victoria Chapter Manager, Martha Delfas at [vic@aila.org.au](mailto:vic@aila.org.au).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'H' and 'G' intertwined, with a horizontal line crossing through the middle.

**Heath Gledhill**  
**State Chapter President, Victoria**  
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Submission authored by Dr Meredith Dobbie, Chair, AILA Vic Environment Committee