# DEVONPORT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY 2022-2032

July 2022

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*Devonport City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land on which we stand and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the tradition, and the culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.*

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# 1. Executive Summary

### DOSS Overview

The Devonport Open Space Strategy (DOSS) is a 10-year strategy that builds upon previous versions of the Open Space Strategy, to reflect current and future public open space (POS) requirements and acts as an overarching document for all related government and Council policies, strategies and documents. It sets out typical POS requirements including quantifying and describing the existing open space network, and classifying the different types of spaces to assist with analysis of gaps in provision and diversity. It also provides direction for how POS should be planned and managed in the future.

Devonport City Council (Council) requires a balanced approach to the protection of natural values and more active recreation forms such as parks and other sporting facilities. The DOSS identifies underutilised or unequal distribution of POS, recommends ways to improve access to POS, and sets expectations for the development assessment processes of future POS contributions. It also considers future trends and challenges for open space, such as changing population, demographics, recreational interests, community health and safety, urban heat island effects, and impacts on environmental and cultural values.

The **DOSS Goals** provide guidance to ensure the POS network is:

- Equitable and Diverse
- Connected & Accessible
- Safe and Healthy
- Social and Cultural
- Sustainable& Conserved
- Managed and Strategic

For the purposes of the DOSS, the term 'public open space' is defined as ***land in public ownership and/or under public management that is freely accessible and provides recreation, nature conservation and leisure benefits***. This includes public parks, gardens, reserves, waterways, linear corridors for walking and cycling, publicly owned forecourts and squares, and any publicly owned sporting venues.

The municipality has 405 hectares of useable POS, which excludes open spaces that are private, restricted or limited for community use, including non-Council managed Crown Land and private open spaces (e.g. sport fields, golf courses, race courses, education sites).

The DOSS incorporates a review of supporting documents including, but not limited to, Cradle Coast Regional Strategy, the Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework, Council strategies and plans, the planning scheme, approved development plans, relevant legislations, and strategies by other Tasmanian Councils.

### Engagement Findings

The strategy is based on engagement with Council representatives, key stakeholders and the community. The engagement process was informed by GHD's Loveable Cities Framework to emphasise the unique characteristics and 'loveable' aspects of Devonport. The 'place identity' and 'people's experiences' guide the form and function of a loveable city. The provision and quality of open spaces are critical to this approach as they contribute to our affinity to a place. The Loveable Cities Framework informed the survey development and assessment, to help understand what the community love about their open spaces and/or hope to see improved in the future.

Feedback was obtained via survey collections and four (4) community pop-up sessions in parks across the city. When asked what people love about their open spaces, the majority or responses related to enjoyment of the unique environment, interaction with nature, participating in outdoor recreation and connecting with their community. And when asked what would attract people to spend more time in their POS, responses largely related to suggested improvements or provision of POS infrastructure to support socialising and recreation. There were also POS values and/or recommendations for specific suburbs. This engagement feedback has informed the DOSS Action Plan.

## POS Framework and Analysis Findings

The DOSS POS Classification Framework provides an analysis of existing POS as defined under the following two categories:

- **POS Hierarchy** (size and catchment) – the majority of POS is categorised as Regional (63%), with the remainder as Local (22%) and District (15%).
- **POS Function** (role and character) – a large proportion of the municipal POS is categorised as Environmental Land (67%) and only a small amount as Cultural/Special Purpose (3%). The remainder is Semi-natural (12%), Parks and Gardens (6%), or Sport and Recreation (12%).

Based on the POS Classifications Framework, the DOSS includes a POS Gap Analysis for Devonport's residential suburbs within 400m of existing POS. Key findings are as follows:

- There are notable gaps in POS provision for Central Devonport, East Devonport, Spreyton, Stony Rise, and Miandetta.
- Improvements are needed for POS quality and facilities to meet community needs and changing demographics.
- Numerous Pocket Parks (POS less than 0.5Ha in size) exist across Central and East Devonport, which are excluded from the POS calculations, and it is recommended Council expand the size of these spaces.
- Improvements for access and connectivity to existing POS are recommended, particularly along the coast and riverbanks.

## DOSS Action Plan

The DOSS Action Plan is a key outcome of the DOSS, as it sets prioritised targets to realise the strategy objectives, and identifies additional areas of study required to improve Devonport's POS. It also has the potential to provide exponential social and economic benefit to the region through early planning to ensure best use of capital expenditure.

The DOSS Action Plan is structured as follows:

- General POS recommended actions, grouped according to the DOSS Goals.
- Specific suburb recommended actions.

Key recommendations from the Action Plan include:

- Provide additional POS in areas identified in the DOSS Gaps Analysis.
- Expand the size of existing Pocket Parks (<0.5Ha) to provide useful POS, through acquisition of adjoining properties.
- Improve POS quality via capital works and embellishments (e.g. play areas, seating, tables, shelters, signage, barbecues, drinking fountains).
- Conduct an existing POS improvement plan, including audits & upgrades processes.
- Maintain and enhance the natural environment for community access whilst ensuring conservation and biodiversity values.
- Support development of TPP in relation to Health and wellbeing to ensure recreation and open space opportunities are aligned with overarching land use planning provisions.
- Establish requirements under permit conditions for developers.
- Introduce a Public Open Space Contributions and Acquisitions Policy and related Monetary Reserves Management Policy in accordance with the Provisions of the Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993.
- Prepare a Planning Scheme Amendment to support the DOSS objectives to rezone Council owned land parcels in General Residential zoning, to Open Space zoning.

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# 2. Introduction

## 2.1 Purpose of the Strategy

Open space is important to our daily lives for many reasons - providing us recreation, socialisation, play, contemplation, amenity, green infrastructure, and conservation of our natural environments. The Devonport Open Space Strategy (DOSS) provides the strategic direction for the future planning, provision, design and management of public open space (POS) in Devonport over the next 10 years.

The strategy is informed by extensive engagement to reflect what the community love and/or expect for their open spaces. It assesses existing POS, then outlines actions to provide equitable distribution and diversity of POS and to anticipate the POS requirements for Devonport's forecast population and changing leisure and recreation trends.

The strategy aims to assist Devonport City Council (Council) and developers in providing equitable distribution, accessibility and quality POS outcomes via policy and guidelines. It also provides consistent definitions for open space terms to give clarity around POS decisions and policy development.

Finally, the DOSS helps guide Council decisions around POS investment or acquisitions and informs Council's POS asset management program through a prioritised action plan that spans the life of the Strategy.

## 2.2 Project drivers

The DOSS supports Devonport Strategic Plan 2009-2030 and Council's vision for Devonport to be *'a thriving and welcoming regional City, living lightly by river and sea.'* In particular the strategy supports Goal 2.3.5 to *'provide and maintain sustainable parks, gardens and open spaces to appropriate standards.'*

Council have identified the need to review their Strategic Plan for Devonport's public open spaces in their Annual Plan 2020-21 under Outcome 2.3. Development of the DOSS and associated actions will empower Council decision makers to respond efficiently and effectively in assessing development proposals, formulating policies and developing budgets related to POS.

The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* identifies the objectives of the planning process which includes the protection of public infrastructure and other assets for the benefit of the community, to provide for the consolidation of approvals for land use or development, and to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment. A POS strategy for Devonport is important to prevent ad-hoc decisions about POS contributions and missed opportunities to acquire or protect important open space connections.

Devonport City Council have invested in large public recreational areas recently in the Bluff Precinct, Living City Waterfront project and the Coastal Pathway. Both public space upgrades benefit the community both economically and socially through the provision of attractive and accessible open spaces in the city. The DOSS will identify linkages between major recreational areas to maximise community benefit and identify other potential recreational precincts.

Due to Devonport's location and active Port, it services a wider region of the population than just those that live within the municipality and as such the open spaces services a larger population. Through undertaking an audit of facilities and reviewing this in contrast with community wants and needs, facility requirements can be understood and more readily provided through annual budget cycles or cash-in-lieu policy. Such provisions have the capacity to facilitate broader uses of open spaces, including as event spaces for the region.

## 3. Loveable Cities Framework

The DOSS is informed by GHD's Loveable Cities Framework to help emphasise the unique characteristics of Devonport (the ready-made advantages of the city).

The 'Loveable City' framework, tried and tested through project work in various planning disciplines, considers 20 aspects aligned with five core dimensions to influence outcomes and provide lasting social benefits. The five dimensions include **Commerce, Local Empowerment, Social and Cultural life, Health and Wellbeing, Amenities, and Infrastructure** (refer Figure 1).

These Dimensions support the underlying principles of the Council's Strategic Plan which are to create a city as a place to live, invest, work, shop and visit.

***Figure 1 The Loveable Cities Framework***

An approach to POS planning is to shift the paradigm to make our public places "loveable" by focussing on those elements that contribute to our affinity to a place. Key to the creation of a loveable city or region is that the form and function is guided by, and developed in response to, the 'place identity' and the 'people's experience' (Figure 2).

**Place identity** – These are the features that celebrate the uniqueness of a place (e.g. natural landmarks, architectural features, open space, local icons, or a business that means something to the community - perhaps the local bakery makes the best vanilla slice).

**People's experience** – This celebrates the lived reality of a place. It takes into consideration the experience of each visitor, worker and resident by investigating their reason for using the place, interactions within it and their overall experience.

The 'loveable' approach to planning for open space provision connects tangible elements such as physical form and urban infrastructure, to intangible elements - social interactions, daily routines, gathering areas and the uniqueness of local character. Connecting intangible and tangible elements in this way enables us to apply a lived experience approach to urban planning.

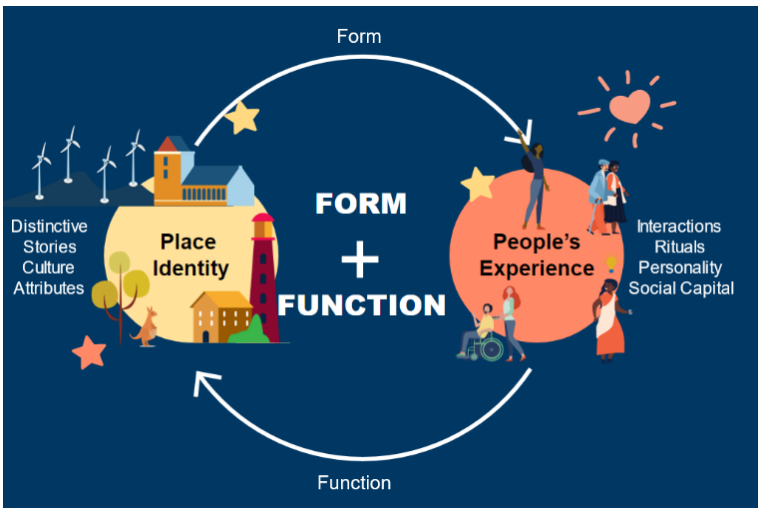


***Figure 2 The Loveable Cities Form + Function***

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# 4. Value of Public Open Space

## 4.1 Defining POS

**For the purpose of the DOSS, the term 'public open space' is defined as land in public ownership and/or under public management that is freely accessible and provides recreation, nature conservation and leisure benefits. This includes public parks, gardens, reserves, waterways, linear corridors for walking and cycling, publicly owned forecourts and squares, and any publicly owned outdoor sporting venues.**

Council considers community access, use and enjoyment of public open space a priority for the DOSS. Therefore, types of open space that are restricted or limited for community use are excluded from the Strategy, including non-Council managed Crown Land, restricted open space (e.g. schools or cemeteries), encumbered open space (e.g. easement or detention basin), pocket parks (<0.5ha in size) and private open spaces (e.g. golf course or racecourse). Refer to **Appendix A-1** for POS Terms and Definitions.

Whilst these areas may provide some recreational or environmental benefit, they are excluded from the DOSS because Council does not have direct control over aspects of these spaces, such as access, design, and/or use. This ensures the DOSS focuses on providing adequate types of 'public open space' preserved for future generations with less potential to be divested or converted to another use.

## 4.2 Public open space challenges

There have been many changes to population and external factors that have influenced the role of public spaces. Some of the short and long-term challenges that regional areas such as Devonport are facing include:

- Aging profile of the Tasmanian population
- Providing for diverse and changing health, well-being and recreational needs
- Balancing competing POS uses and interests (i.e. formal vs informal recreation)
- Increasing pressure and demand on open spaces for amenities and infrastructure, with possible environmental impacts
- Meeting community expectations regarding open space amenities and provisions
- Providing multi-use spaces with conflicting maintenance challenges
- Economic and technological evolution
- Increased maintenance costs to Council for the creation and management of a variety of open spaces
- Declining biodiversity
- Climate change and extreme weather events

These trends and pressures place increasing importance and value on open spaces. It is vital to preserve existing POS and identify opportunities for new POS, to adapt to changing community needs and ensure provision for future generations.

## 4.3 Public open space benefits

There has been a resulting shift in the understanding that accessible and sustainable open spaces result in healthier communities as outlined in the *United Nations Strategic Development Project of Green Star Communities- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being*.

The POS network substantially contributes to the liveability, identity and character of Devonport, and provides numerous benefits for the community, culture, economy and environment. These POS values include, but are not limited to:

**Community**

- Social interaction, community safety and engagement
- Health, wellbeing and relaxation
- Physical fitness, sport and formal/informal recreation opportunities
- Children's development, exploration and outdoor play
- Contact with nature

**Culture**

- Cultural diversity and inclusion
- Sense of place and local identity
- Improved visual amenity and profile of the city and community
- Cultural and historic preservation, reflection and tourism opportunities

**Economy**

- Improved land value
- Responding to emerging social and technological trends
- Reduced cost on health care services via physical and mental health benefits
- Unique tourism environments, visitor appeal and commercial activities or events
- Quantifiable ecological services (e.g. erosion/flood control, and climate regulation)

**Environment**

- Biodiversity and ecosystems conservation, protection and enhancement
- Resilience in a changing climate and extreme weather events
- Water quality improvements and reduced impervious surfaces and erosion
- Reduced energy use and urban heat island impacts via greening and cooling

***Devonport open space (Source: Photo by Don Rockliff, GHD)***

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# 5. DOSS Vision and Goals

## 5.1 DOSS Vision

***Devonport's equitable, integrated and accessible POS network underpins and strengthens our city's liveability and resilience for current and future generations.***

## 5.2 DOSS Goals

The DOSS Goals provide a holistic approach to planning for POS outcomes. The DOSS Action Plan is categorised by these Goals to ensure future initiatives, policy and funding provide a balance across the strategy's main objectives.

The following Goals support this strategic vision and the Loveable Cities Framework, to ensure Devonport's public open spaces are:

**Goal 1 - Equitable and Diverse –** The POS network has equitable distribution and a variety of sizes, functions, mixed-uses across the municipality. It provides a balance of formal and informal recreation and allows for flexible use, various programs and emerging/changing recreational trends and technological advancements.

**Goal 2 - Connected and Accessible -** Public open spaces are easily reached for the Devonport community including all ages, abilities, gender and cultural backgrounds. Connectivity includes safe links between open spaces, walking/cycling paths, community facilities/services and public transport.

**Goal 3 - Safe and Healthy -** Healthy open spaces promote active lifestyles and provide numerous health and well-being benefits. They are safe for all users and designed and managed according to current standards, CPTED safety principles and relevant emergency management requirements.

**Goal 4 - Social and Cultural -** In line with the Loveable Cities Framework, open spaces help define the city's 'place identity' and 'people's experiences.' Local character, natural features, and historic and cultural values and assets (both indigenous and non-indigenous) are protected and celebrated. Open spaces support shared use, social connectivity and interaction. Community involvement and strong partnerships are encouraged in the planning, use and management of open space.

**Goal 5 - Sustainable and Conserved -** The POS network contributes to local biodiversity and ecological outcomes. Sustainability, biodiversity, water management and resource efficiency is considered in all aspects of POS planning, design, construction, management and use. POS will help mitigate climate impacts and build community wellbeing and resilience through ecological services, shade, urban cooling and leverage opportunities to connect with nature.

**Goal 6 - Managed and Strategic –** POS land, services and facilities are aesthetically appealing, clean, welcoming, and sustainably managed. Ongoing and sufficient investment is available to ensure continuous POS maintenance and improvement is provided through collaborative government management. Strategic policy is developed to protect open space values and achieve DOSS recommendations.

# 6. Context

## 6.1 About Devonport

Situated in north-central Tasmania on the Bass Strait coast, Devonport is the State's third largest independent city. The Port of Devonport and the Devonport Airport are key arrival and departure locations for visitors, locals and freight. Other major features of the city include the Mersey and Don Rivers, the Mersey Bluff and Lighthouse, Bass Strait Maritime Centre, Paranaple Centre, Don River Railway and Museum, Tasmanian Arboretum, and Tiagarra Cultural Centre and Museum.

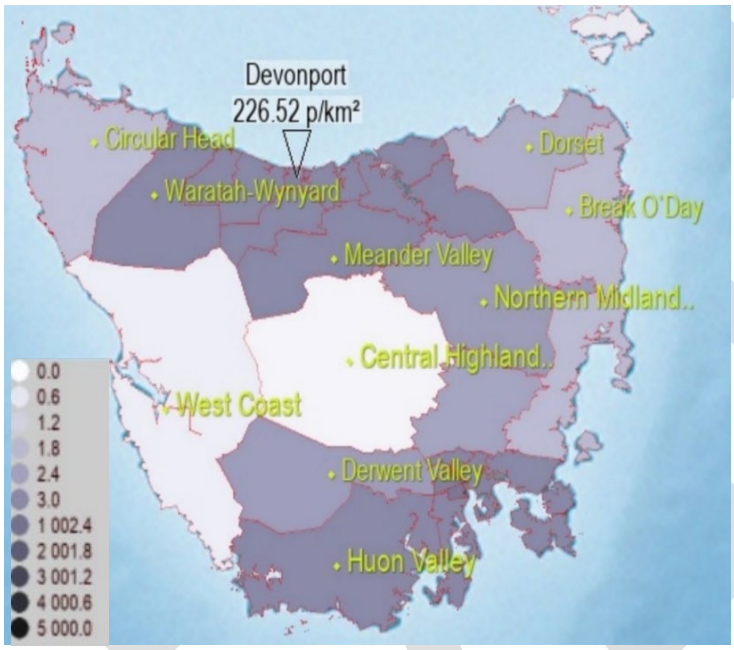


***Figure 3 Devonport context and population density map (2017 p/km2). Source: www.population.com.au/lga/61610#***

## 6.2 Traditional Owners and Country

The indigenous population in this area included the Tommeginne, the Punnilerpanner, the Pallittorre, the Noeteeler and the Plairhekehillerplue; however, after colonisation there are no recorded descendents of these people. The indigenous population of Devonport today however includes thousands of descendants of Dalrymple (Dolly) Johnson and the community maintain cultural, custodian responsibilities for country.

Devonport is home to an active Indigenous community based at Tiagarra Cultural Centre and Museum. The Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation manage Tiagarra and engage in cultural heritage activities, awareness and education and share this knowledge with both the indigenous community members and the wider community.

Tiagarra is located at one of the most significant Indigenous sites in Tasmania (lutruwita). As a meeting place of the Tommeginne people of the Northwest Coast, this area is marked with petroglyphs. Understanding the connection to Country and the importance of this place is a key part of engagement with local elders.

The involvement of the indigenous community and their continuing culture and connection to Country is vital for the region's public open spaces. Council shall continue to support engagement, planning, and reporting processes to increase participation with Aboriginal communities in POS management and projects.

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## 6.3 Demographics and trends

From 2016 to 2021, Devonport's resident population has steadily grown from 25,162 to 26,150[1] indicating an average year on year growth of 165 residents.[2]

Furthermore, the Greater Devonport Residential Growth Strategy 2021-2041 (GDRGS) released in June 2022, adopts a deliberate policy direction for residential growth including the endorsement of a population growth target for Devonport of 30,000 by the year 2030.

| | Devonport | | Australia |
|---|---|---|---|
| | # | % | % |
| People who left school at Year 9 or below | 4,075 | 16 | 11.3 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples | 1,892 | 7 | 3.3 |
| People aged over 65 years | 5,433 | 21 | 15.7 |
| Private dwellings without internet access | 2,291 | 23 | 14.1 |
| People who speak english not well or not at all | 98 | 0 | 3.1 |

Compared to the national average, of those living in Devonport there is a higher proportion of people aged over 65, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a higher proportion of people who left school before year 10.

The DOSS is important to address population growth and demographic trends, to ensure equitable distribution and access to POS and provide recreational opportunities, natural environment experiences, and social connections for the resultant physical and mental health outcomes of these activities.

***Figure 4 Summary of Devonport demographics (Source: ABS Index of IRSD)***

### Visitation and changing lifestyles

Devonport has a relatively high proportion of day-trip visitation especially from the Spirit of Tasmania via the Port. Furthermore, as the latest Covid situation revealed, people have moved in unprecedented numbers to regional locations such as Devonport seeking a lifestyle change, particularly with the ability to work remotely.

There is often positive economic benefit from improving public amenity and liveability of a city by attracting new residents and encouraging visitors to stay longer. Council have identified this in past studies including the 2014 Living City Study[3] and have demonstrated a commitment to these values in projects such as the Coastal Pathway, Bluff Precinct and the Devonport Aquatic Centre.

### Recreational trends

The Devonport Sports Infrastructure Master Plan notes an increase in demand for sporting infrastructure and assesses sports participation and facilities of 9 sporting precincts across Devonport. The sports assessed include Football (Soccer), Netball, Basketball, Touch Football, Australian Football (AFL), Cricket, Hockey, Tennis, and Volleyball. The report indicates that 52% of the 21 sports analysed have seen at least a 10% increase in membership 2016-2019, with 45% of these increased membership by 20%. At the same time, there is a nation-wide shift towards self-organised (casual/social) physical activities, such as cycling, running, walking and mountain biking.

[1] 2021 Devonport, Census All persons QuickStats, Australian Bureau of Statistics, retrieved 7 July 2022, https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA61610
[2] Region summary: Devonport(c), Australian Bureau of Statistics, retrieved 7 July 2022, https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=61610
[3] https://www.livingcitydevonport.com.au/download/135/public-documents/3811/hill-pdaliving-city-regional-benefits-opportunities-report.pdf

## 6.4 Current land-use

The Devonport LGA is about 116 square kilometres (refer Figure 2). Around two-thirds of the LGA is zoned rural and agricultural (to the west and south)and is mostly located south of the Bass Highway in Tugrah, west of Quoiba, South Spreyton and Kelcey Tier.

The more densely populated urban and residential areas are located north-central, between the Don and Mersey rivers. The suburbs of Devonport, East Devonport and Spreyton make up the most substantial residential density in the LGA. Whilst, much of the city's commercial and industrial areas are along the Mersey River, including the CBD along the west edge and the Port on the east.

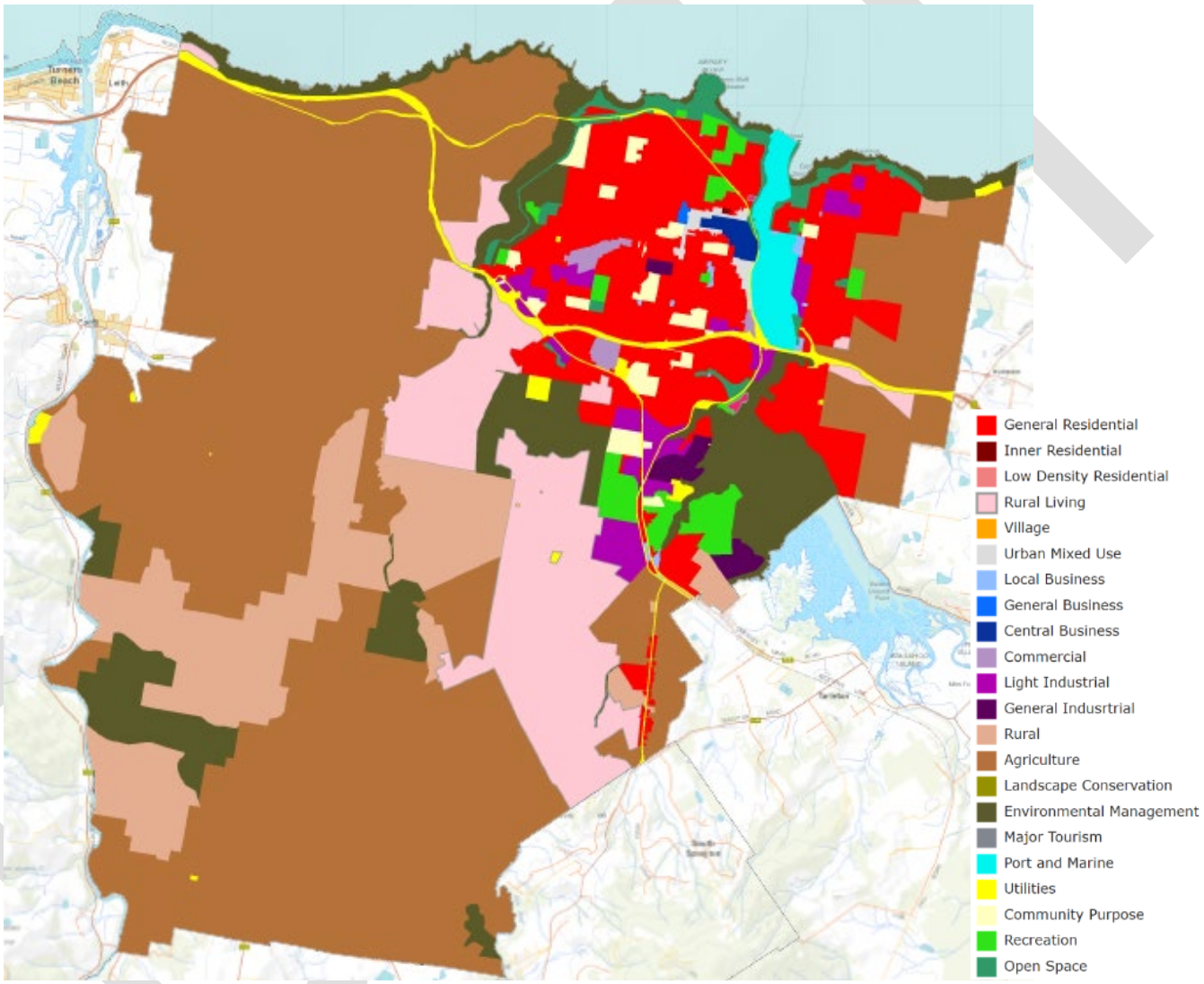


*Figure 5 Devonport planning zones map (Source: thelist.tas.gov.au)*

## 6.5 Growth areas and future development

Council's Greater Devonport Residential Growth Strategy (GDRGS) details ten investigation areas to accommodate Devonport's future growth for both the General Residential and Rural Living Zones. The spatial distribution of these areas is predominantly in the south-western section of the LGA (e.g. Tugrah and Don).

For future open space planning in these areas the following should be considered:

- A future POS acquisitions and contributions policy should contain strong recommendations for the provision of land for open space opportunities in the investigation areas of the GDRGS for potential General Residential Zoning. These areas are removed from the current concentration of residential development and Council owned land.
- For land that has potential for inclusion in the Rural Living Zone, larger lot sizes would lessen the need for POS areas. Utilisation of opportunities for cash in lieu contributions or for trail connections to adjoining areas would be an opportunity to explore further.

There is also the recent proposed amendment of the Planning Scheme for the rezoning of the Devonport Showgrounds from Recreation to General Residential, and the incorporation of a Specific Area Plan to guide this. It is likely that further areas currently in other zoning such as industrial may be considered as potential for infill residential development.

The DOSS provides an assessment of POS needs in these new growth areas and makes recommendations regarding appropriate POS contribution levels and mechanisms for acquisition.

**Meercroft Park (Source: Photo by Don Rockliff, GHD)**

# 7. Policy and Strategy Context

## 7.1 Policy and strategy context

The Devonport Open Space Strategy (DOSS) acts as an overarching planning document for all Council plans and documents related to public open space (POS).

It also complements other aligned Council plans and strategies that support community, environmental and economic wellbeing. The DOSS is guided by, and interfaces with, numerous Federal, State and Local acts, policies, strategies and plans (refer Table 01).

***Table 1 Documents relevant to DOSS***

| **Federal Government**<br>**Legislation and Policies** | **State Government**<br>**Legislation and Policies** |
|---|---|
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Heritage Protection Act 1984 | Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework (2010) |
| Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972 | Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Strategy 2010-2030 (Regional Strategy) |
| Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 | Get Moving Tasmania |
| Disability Discrimination Act 1992 | Strong Liveable Communities Implementation Strategy (Aged 50 & over) |
| Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 | Premier's Health and Well Being Advisory Council |
| Disability Discrimination Act 1992 | Premier's Well-being Framework (draft) |
| Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 | Local Government Building and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1993 |
| Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 | Local Government Act 1993 |
| | Land Use Planning and Approvals Act |
| **Local Government Policies and Strategies** | |
| Devonport Open Space Strategy (2015) | Devonport Living City Masterplan (2017) |
| Devonport Road Network Strategy (2016 & Draft 2022) | Devonport City Council Pedestrian and Bike Strategies (currently under review) |
| Devonport City Council Reserves, Parks and Gardens By-law (2017) | Local Govt Association of Tasmania Infrastructure Contributions Discussion Paper (April 2022) |
| Devonport Environment Strategy, Climate Change Adaptation Plan | Devonport Sports Infrastructure Master Plan (to 2035) |
| Devonport Stormwater Strategy (2012) | |
| **Local Site-based Plans** | |
| Kelcey Tier Greenbelt Bushfire Management Plan (2019) | Masterplans for major parks/playing fields:<br>Kelcey Tier Masterplan (2019)<br>Highfield Park Masterplan (2018)<br>Pioneer Park Masterplan (2018) |
| Don Reserve Bushfire Mngt Plan (2019) | |
| Don Reserve Environmental Mngt Plan (2020) | |

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## 7.2 Overview of key documents

Aspects from related key documents are summarised below (refer **Appendix A-2** for the Background Review Summary).

**Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework 2010 (TOSPF)** – the TOSPF provides a state-wide approach to POS planning. A total of 60 recommendations are set out, grouped to cover POS policy areas of planning and governance, land management, training and education, design, marketing and promotion. The DOSS meets the objectives of the TOSFP to further provide policy guidance and maintain the open space network as an integrated system.

**Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPP) -** A draft scoping paper was released to form a new part of Tasmania's land use planning system. There is the opportunity to align the DOSS with this process to ensure it is consistent with these overarching land use planning provisions.

**Regional Land Use Strategies -** Tasmania's three regional land use strategies were first declared in 2011 with each providing strategic direction for land use and development over a 25 year period. The Devonport LGA sits within the Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Strategy area, the document is *entitled Living on the Coast – The Cradle Coast Reginal Land Use Planning Framework*. Specifically, under Part 4.9 (a)-(e) Land Use Policies for Active Communities, the strategy promotes the implementation of open space strategies that align with the TOSPPF and the Cradle Coast Regional Open Space Strategy.

**Cradle Coast Open Space Plan (CCOSP) -** The CCOSP provides the POS framework, definitions, key issues and strategic direction for nine local Councils in the West and Northwest of Tasmania. Specific issues identified in relation to Devonport include:

- The Porcupine Hill Forest Reserve is the only existing area of regional significance, and there are no national parks located in the Municipality.
- Strong planning controls should be in place to ensure public open space along the coast is not degraded especially where competition from other uses (e.g. road or rail) may erode POS form and function. A coastal path providing unbroken connection from Port Sorrel to Stanley is recommended.
- Suitably wide corridors on both Don and Mersey riverbanks should protect natural values while facilitating appropriate use. Planning controls may extend to protecting vistas.
- Devonport will require an increased investment in public open space to meet aspirational targets. It is suggested focus on central civic areas can provide competing regional benefits to attract different types of investment and cultural pursuits. Collaboration with neighbouring LGAs may encourage a similar approach within the region.

**Legislative provisions -** The *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993* gives Council the authority to acquire POS as a part of any subdivision proposal and to require cash in lieu of open space or to refuse a subdivision application because it should include or omit POS. Previous TASCAT (formerly RMPAT) decisions have placed more emphasis on the need for specific assessment of open space requirements before requiring its provision or the payment of cash in lieu. These opportunities are also considered in the Local Government Association of Tasmania *Infrastructure Contributions Discussion Paper* (April 2022), which provides an examination of infrastructure contributions schemes in Australian States and considers POS provision. Infrastructure provision in the form of public open spaces is noted as the most common policy and strategy approach for the example Councils. LGAT notes that the strength of this lies in the authority and legislative power to do so under the *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993*.[4]

[4]Infrastructure Contributions Discussion Paper, April 2022, Local Government Association Tasmania.

**Devonport Strategic Plan 2009-2030** – the plan outlines how Council will achieve its vision for Devonport to become a thriving and welcoming regional City living lightly by river and sea. The goals from the Strategic Plan that are supported by the DOSS include:

*Table 2* ***Strategies from the Strategic Plan supported by the DOSS***

| Number | Outcome | How DOSS Supports the Strategy |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy 1.2.1 | Support the conservation and maintenance of biodiversity including coastal landscapes and preservation of areas of remnant vegetation | Conservation and biodiversity recommendations are included via university research |
| Strategy 2.1.1 | Apply and review the Planning Scheme as required, to ensure it delivers local community character and appropriate land use | It is recommended a Council Acquisitions and Contributions Policy be drafted to guide POS decisions |
| Strategy 2.3.5 | Provide and maintain sustainable parks, gardens and open spaces to appropriate standards | Assists Council's planning, property management and infrastructure areas in deciding the appropriate form and location of open space for the future |
| Strategy 3.2.1 | Support tourism through the provision of well designed and managed infrastructure and facilities | The Council and State Government's commitment to the LIVING CITY vision is enhanced by the DOSS to create a city where people want to work, live and visit |
| Strategy 3.2.4 | Promote our natural environment and assets to underpin tourism opportunities | Recommendations for POS provision and access supports improved tourism by emphasising valued natural icons |
| Strategy 4.1.1 | Provide and manage accessible sport, recreation and leisure facilities and programs | The DOSS compliments the Council Sport and Recreation Strategy |
| Strategy 4.1.3 | Promote passive recreational usage including walking, bike paths, trails, parks and playspaces | The DOSS assesses POS quality and provision and recommends locations for improved facilities and/or access |

# 8. Engagement and consultation

## 8.1 Engagement approach

Engagement with stakeholders and the community has helped inform the outcomes of the DOSS. Feedback was sought via surveys and community pop-up sessions in parks across all suburbs in the study area. The engagement was successful in obtaining useful information and invoked a high amount of community interest (refer **Appendix A-4** for the Engagement Summary report).

The engagement process was mindful that the Devonport community has faced some challenges over the last six months; therefore the process aimed to make engagement simple, fun and interactive. Specifically, engagement activities sought to:

- Confirm what the community loves about their open spaces
- Elicit community feedback about the current level of service being provided
- Identify future community needs and expectations for their open spaces

The Loveable Cities Framework informed the survey development and assessment, to help understand what the community love about their open spaces and/or hope to see improved in the future. Survey questions were also framed to gather key information that Council needed to know for the strategy including:

- Access to POS
- Gaps in POS provision
- POS Quality
- POS Diversity

QR codes linking to the survey were set up in 36 open space locations across all the key suburb areas. A total of 479 completed surveys were collected which provided quantitative and qualitative feedback gauging community perception and opinion.

Four community pop-up sessions supported the broader roll out of online surveys. These sessions enabled a broader demographic, including children, to participate. The pop-up sessions were also an excellent opportunity for Council staff and Councillors to engage with their community directly, building trusting and positive relationships.

The overwhelming message from stakeholder engagement is that involving community in strategy development not only allows for the collection of high-quality data to inform decision making, but also builds community trust and support for future infrastructure planning and development.

**Engagement Pop-up Session (Source: Photo by Devonport City Council)**

## 8.2 Engagement findings overview

The quality and detail provided by survey respondents demonstrates that the Devonport community use their open spaces regularly, and that they are invested and committed to the ongoing improvement and future of their open spaces.

The following provides a summary of key engagement findings about POS more broadly. For specific suburb POS engagement findings and recommendations, refer to **Section 12** and to the DOSS Action Plan.

***What is Devonport's love story with their open spaces?***

The provision of open space provides an opportunity to connect with nature, socialise and exercise. And as the Loveable Cities Framework highlights, open spaces can also contribute to a sense of local identity and can often have personal significance as a setting for significant life moments or experiences.

Given this, the survey included the following two main questions (in addition to others) to understand the value that the Devonport Community attribute to their open space:

- **What do you love most about this space?**
- **What would attract you to spend more time here?**

Of the 479 surveys received, there were 650 responses to these two open-ended questions, which were then categorised against the five dimensions the Loveable Cities Framework (**Figure 6**).

The majority of response related to either the **built and natural environment (54%)** and **health and wellbeing (32%)**.

*Figure 6 Summary of responses regarding community values*

***What do you love most about this space?***

The majority of responses to this question related to the following POS aspects:

> ***"The opportunity to exercise in beautiful surroundings and in the open air. Peace and tranquillity. Interact with nature".***

- **A healthy natural environment:** the highest number of responses was that people love the natural environment, wildlife, scenery and green space.
- **Active lifestyles:** many responses were about people's ability to participate regularly in active and passive exercise and sport in their open spaces. Respondents frequently discussed how great it is to have large open spaces, walking tracks amongst nature and play equipment for children of all ages.
- **Places with distinctive character:** respondents love how open spaces in Devonport were enjoyable to visit as they were large, uncrowded, close to waterways such as beaches and rivers, had coastal views, trees and native fauna.
- **Connected communities:** respondents noted that the open spaces were accessible, peaceful, and social places where they could connect and spend quality time with their friends and families.

***What would attract you to spend more time here?***

The majority of responses to this question related to the following POS aspects:

> ***"Areas that offer a place to entertain and amuse children of various ages and a space that allows families to gather and connect, share food and offer amenities"***

- **Supportive infrastructure**: received the highest number of responses. It suggests that supportive infrastructure would increase the time spent in POS, but would not necessarily be the reason for visiting the space.
- **Connected communities:** a majority responses requested facilities to support social gatherings (e.g. seating, tables, toilets, barbecues and shelters) and improved spaces to form social connections and cherished memories.
- **Active lifestyles:** many respondents identified the need for more play equipment for children, including all-abilities play areas.
- Other responses included:
  - More seating, particularly along walking tracks for elderly.
  - Signage outlining the heritage and native fauna of the area.
  - More trees particularly native trees that would attract diverse bird life.
  - Appropriate management of invasive weeds, maintenance of the grass and rubbish removal.

**General POS recommendations from engagement:**

Given the above findings, key recommendations for the DOSS include:

- Maintain and enhance the natural environment for community access whilst ensuring conservation (refer Section 13 for specific biodiversity recommendations).
- Maintain and enhance large open spaces, walking tracks and play areas – and provide additional ones where required (in particular nature-based and all-abilities).
- Improve POS infrastructure to support social gatherings (e.g. seating, tables, toilets, barbecues and shelters). Provide seating along walking tracks for elderly.
- Improve maintenance of weeds, grass areas and rubbish.
- Provide interpretive/educational signage for heritage and natural values.

# 9. Existing POS

This section provides an overview of the existing POS in Devonport, as it is helpful to understand how the City's spaces are currently used, to plan for future POS and balance community needs. Devonport has a variety of public open spaces, recreation facilities, and environmental lands. The LGA does not have any national parks; however, there are significant regional scale parks such as Don Reserve, Kelcey Tier Reserve, Mersey Bluff Reserve and Porcupine Hill Reserve (although this is some distance from the population centre). There are also numerous foreshore parks along the Bass Straight, Don River and Mersey River.

Given a large portion (about two-thirds) of the LGA to the south and west is rural or agricultural zoned lands, the DOSS focuses on the inner suburbs (as shown in grey in Figure 4). Therefore, the DOSS excludes the following suburbs for the POS analysis and recommendations: Leith, Forth, Lillico, Forthside, Eugenana, Aberdeen, Melrose, Paloona, and Latrobe.

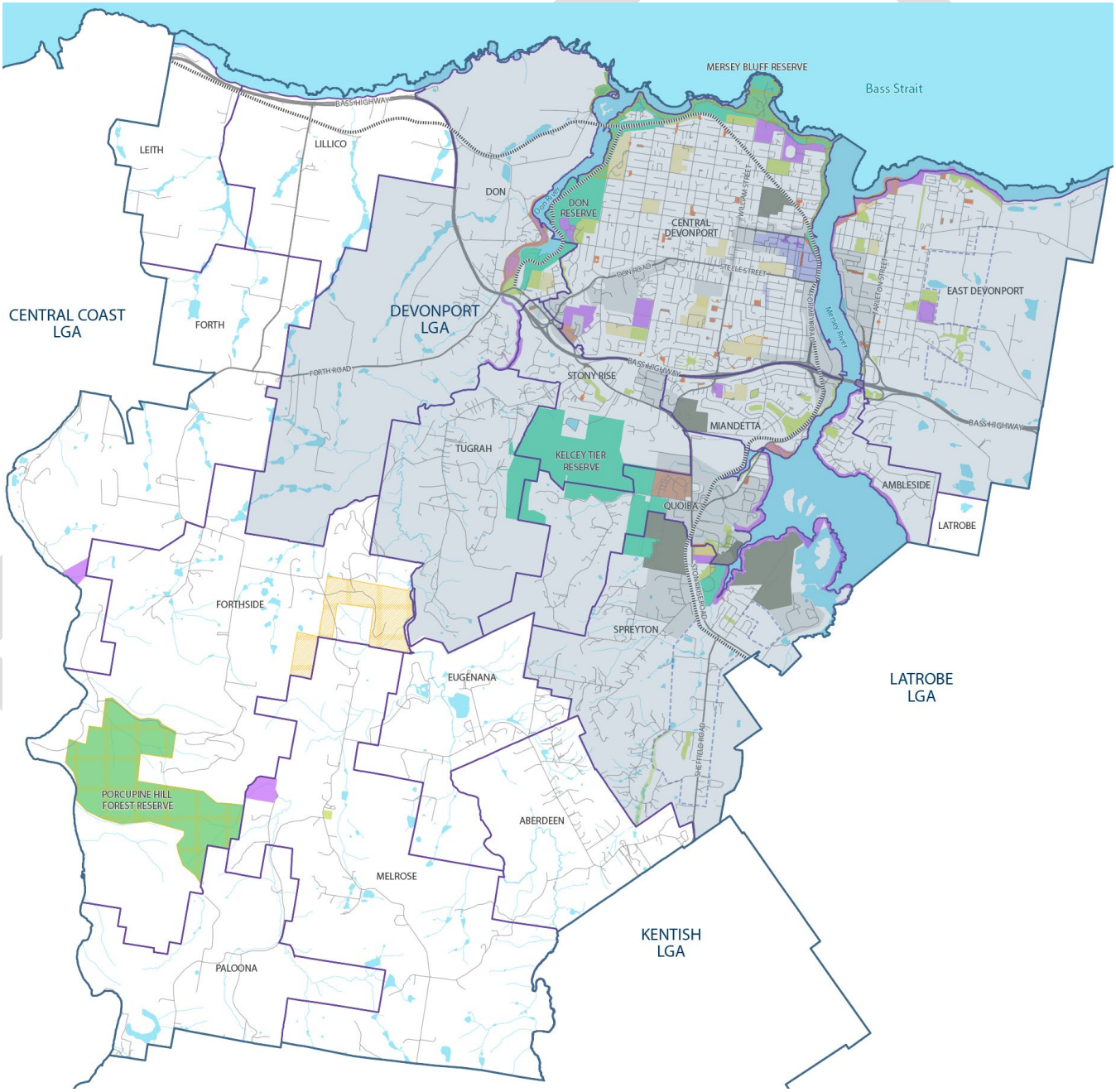


*Figure 7 Devonport LGA and suburbs included for the DOSS*

## 9.1 Existing POS provision

At the time of preparation of this strategy, the total land identified as POS in Devonport was **405 ha, which is 3.5%** of Devonport's total municipal area (11,568.3 ha). This includes POS owned managed by Council, but excludes pocket parks, private lands, and non-Council managed Crown Land.

Rather than focus on a percentage of land, public open space strategies typically refer to provision of POS per capita (hectares per 1,000 people). The standard of 2.4-2.8 hectares of POS per 1000 people is commonly used in Australia. Devonport is above the average rate, with the current rate of **15.5 ha per 1,000 people** (total population of 26,150).

Given Devonport's forecast population growth over the life of the strategy (Council's draft Residential Growth Strategy sets a population target of 30,000 by 2030), it is recommended that Council focus on improving the quality and appeal of existing POS reserves, in balance with provision of new public open spaces in developing areas and in Central Devonport where larger POS areas are lacking.

## 9.2 Tenure and management

Tenure and management of existing POS in Devonport is varied including via Council, Crown land, and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. A high portion of POS along waterfronts is Crown land (shown in orange in Figure 5), including land along the Don and Mersey Rivers, with some management arrangements with Council. As Crown Land is exempt from the requirements of the Devonport Planning Scheme – its use and interface with adjacent Council managed POS may present a challenge in terms of coordination between Commonwealth and local government strategies.

It is therefore highly recommended Council form fixed agreement or management transfers to preserve these POS areas for future generations.

***Figure 8 Crown Land Tenure Map***

## 10. POS Classification Framework

It is important to provide a sufficient amount of POS to cater for existing and future population, but also to ensure provision of quality and diverse types of POS. Diversity of POS allows people the opportunity to enjoy different experiences and helps define the character of Devonport.

The DOSS POS classification framework provides an analysis of existing POS distribution and identifies future community needs. It is based on other open space planning recommendations (e.g. TAS Open Space Policy, VPA, VIC Planning Note no.70). Aligning categories to comparable Open Space Hierarchy and Categories also makes it more efficient to assess benchmarks against other LGAs for open space provision or regional gaps, and to transfer learnings from other Councils.

Within this framework, each POS in Devonport is defined under a system based on the following categories:

- **Hierarchy** (size and catchment - who will use the open space) - Includes levels based on POS size, catchment distance, level of use and significance.
- **Function** (the role and character of the open space) - Includes function types, and in the context of hierarchy, will help guide asset and service provision.

Some public open spaces will have more than one function depending on location, size and demand; however, all sites should have at least one primary function assigned.

The classification framework helps establish required infrastructure associated with different POS functions, catchment and population density. Typically, higher density areas with increased POS demand will require higher levels of service.

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## Hierarchy

The POS hierarchy is based on POS size, catchment by walking distance, level of use, and significance. The DOSS hierarchy includes publicly accessible land managed by Council, but excludes non-Council managed Crown Land, restricted or private open space such as streetscapes, golf courses, or built recreation centres.

The level of hierarchy applied provides an indication of the role the open space is expected to perform and thereby, the size of the site and the scale and quality of the amenities, services and other resources which could be expected to be provided.

Refer to Figure 6 and Table 3 for DOSS POS hierarchy categories – which range from small (Pocket Parks) to large POS (Regional/State/National).

***Table 3 POS Hierarchy Categories***

| Hierarchy | Size | Catchment | Description | DOSS Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pocket Park** | Less than 0.5ha | 200-400m | Open spaces less than 0.5 ha are not classified as POS in the DOSS. Any future POS contributions shall be minimum area of 0.5 hectares (5000m2) and minimum dimension of 20 metres in width. | N/A |
| **Local * (Neighbourhood)** | 0.5-5 ha (minimum 0.5ha and 20m width^) | <800 m | Provides space for residents to enjoy passive or informal recreation activities. Generally quiet, intimate, conveniently located and contributes to local identity. May contain facilities or features of local natural/cultural significance.<br>At least enough space for two activities or groups to use the POS simultaneously (i.e. an open grassed area with seating and playground). | 87.6 ha (22%) |
| **District** (Sub-regional)** | 5-10 ha | 800m – 1.2km | Provides various, medium-scale formal and informal recreation and facilities/features that appeal to the district population. Can accommodate various activities/uses to occur simultaneously without social conflict. For example, a half basketball court, bbqs, picnic tables, grassed area and playground. May contain facilities or features of *district* natural/cultural significance. | 61.8 ha (15%) |
| **Regional** | 10 - 50 ha | 0-15 km | Generally large areas with high recreational, social, environmental and/or tourism value. Primarily caters to the broader regional population and/or protection and enhancement of biodiversity values in a regional context. Provides a range of facilities and features and can accommodate several activities/uses to occur simultaneously without social conflict. May contain facilities or features of *regional* natural/cultural significance. | 255.7 ha (63%) |
| **State or National Park** | Varies | State or National | Open spaces managed by State government agencies which may have sections managed in partnership with Devonport City Council. | none |
| | | | **TOTAL POS** | **405.1 ha** |

^ New POS shall be minimum area of 0.5 hectares (5000m2) and minimum dimension of 20 metres in width.
* Local open space aligns with VPA categories and is the same as 'Neighbourhood' in Devonport Open Space Strategy 2015.
**District open space aligns with VPA categories and is the same as 'Sub-regional' in the Devonport Open Space Strategy 2015.

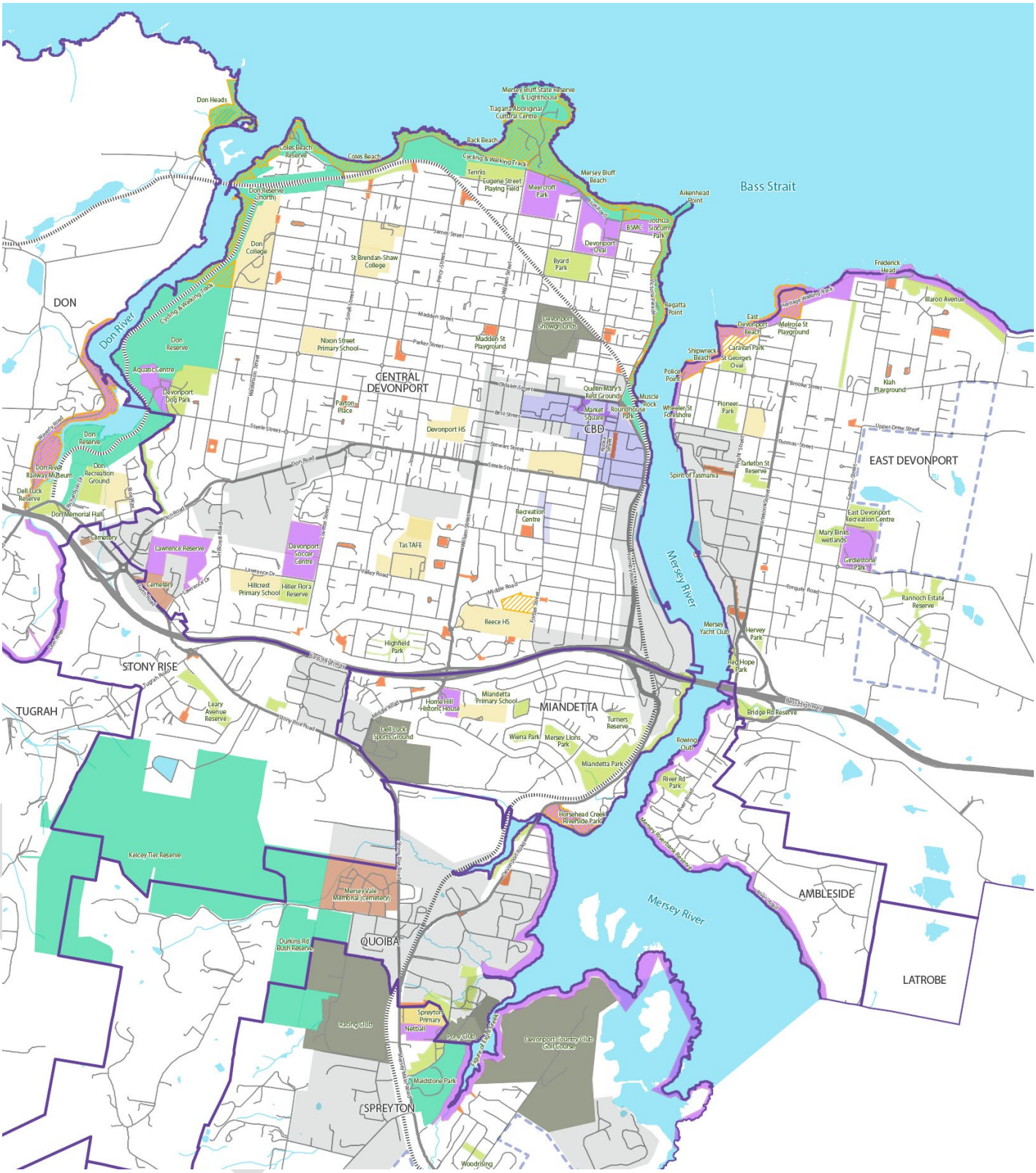


*Figure 9* *POS Hierarchy Map (refer Appendix A-3 for larger maps)*

## Function

Function defines the role and purpose of each POS and provides guidance on infrastructure and facilities required within them. Each type may provide functionality at various levels in the hierarchy. Refer to Figure 7 and Table 4 for DOSS POS hierarchy categories.

***Table 4 Function Categories***

| Function | Council Investment Level++ | Description | Amount (% of total POS) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Crown Land** | N/A | Land under Crown tenure/ownership, which is typically publicly accessible and may have community use value. Some areas may be under Council or Committee of Management; however, are not Council owned and therefore not under direct Council control or influence. Note: Crown Land NOT managed/leased by Council is **excluded** from POS calculations. | N/A |
| **Environmental Land** | Reserve<br>(2015 DOSS map: CFF) | Includes vegetation offset sites, and some remnant native vegetation areas. These areas protect native vegetation and biodiversity, as well the offset loss of native vegetation in newly developed areas. They may have limited public access as their protection provides for and encourages enjoyment by the community in a manner that is sustainable in order to protect and enhance their ecological values. | 270.2 (67%) |
| **Semi-natural** | Reserve<br>(2015 DOSS map: WCT+ WM) | Semi-natural areas ranging from remnant native vegetation through to revegetated and semi-landscaped areas. May include land managed for natural/heritage conservation not included in Tasmania's protected system. Can include long relatively narrow, interconnected areas which may provide visual buffers or movement corridors/trails (people and/or flora and fauna). Recreational uses vary depending on compatibility with natural values. In some areas (i.e. district parks) informal recreation may be the primary use.<br>May include land adjoining creeks or rivers and areas set aside for drainage, stormwater management or water storage (but not encumbered lands). | 48.6 (12%) |
| **Parks and Gardens** | Park<br>(2015 DOSS map: CH, FSR, ICA, PS, VA, WBR) | Modified landscaped areas (formal/informal design) that provide informal recreation and activities. May have natural values, but not as the primary function. Can include children's play spaces, social gathering activities (bbq/picnic areas), water-based recreation (boating/swimming/fishing), leisure, recreation, cycling/MTB, and community gardens/horticulture. | 25.3 (6%) |
| **Sport and recreation** | Park<br>(2015 DOSS map: OS) | Areas primarily used for playing organised sport in an outdoor setting. May include public golf courses and public racecourses. Can also accommodate formal/informal recreation activities (e.g. picnic areas, playgrounds, walking tracks). | 48.2 (12%) |
| **Cultural or Special Purpose** | Park<br>(2015 DOSS map: CCG + HCP) | Unique or single purpose spaces that contribute to local character and provide a space for community use or events. May include urban spaces such as town plazas, squares, historical and cultural sites, or memorial parks. | 12.8 (3%) |

++ Council investment falls under 2 areas: Parks (developed sites) and Reserves (natural sites).

*Figure 10 POS Function Map (refer Appendix A-3 for larger maps)*

# 11. POS distribution analysis

## 11.1 Gap analysis methodology

The following section identifies gaps in distribution of POS across the municipality and contains recommendations to address these gaps. The analysis focuses on the higher density and central Devonport suburbs, as opposed to the surrounding west and south rural/agricultural zoned areas.

In a recent study about access to physical activity in regional Tasmania (by Sisitha et al)[5] in Devonport the average distance to natural amenity/ green space and recreational tracks, is 3.41 and 2.76 km respectively, whereas the literature indicates that distances of 300-400m have substantial health benefits. Therefore, the gap analysis mapping assesses existing POS distribution and reveals areas that are not within a 400 metre walking catchment from an existing POS (see Figure 8).

The modelling excludes the following aspects:

- Rural, low density, and agricultural zoned land
- Public open spaces with an area less than 0.5 ha (Pocket Parks)
- Routes with access to public open spaces blocked by significant barriers (e.g. major roads, waterbodies or steep topographic grades)

## 11.2 Gap analysis findings

The analysis reveals opportunities to increase and improve the provision of POS by providing additional POS, or by improving amenity and accessibility to existing public open spaces. Areas of suburbs that are lacking in POS provision are shown as the black dashed areas in Gaps in POS provision map (Figure 8).

Key findings regarding POS hierarchy, functions and gaps in POS provision, distribution and/or access across the municipality are as follows:

- **POS Hierarchy** (size and catchment) – the majority of POS within Devonport is categorised as Regional (63%), with the remainder as Local (22%) and District (15%).
- **POS Function** – a large proportion of the municipal POS is categorised as Environmental Land (67%) and only a small amount as Cultural/Special Purpose (3%). The remainder is Semi-natural (12%), Parks and Gardens (6%), or Sport and Recreation (12%).
- **Central Devonport** – has a good mix of POS hierarchy and functions, but has a large gap in POS provision in the central and south-eastern parts of the suburb.
- **East Devonport** – has good diversity of POS functions, and several Local and District spaces, but is lacking in Regional level hierarchy.
- **Spreyton** – has a good mix of POS hierarchy categories, but in terms of functions is lacking in 'Parks and Gardens' and 'Cultural or Special Purpose' types of POS.
- **Quoiba** – has a mix of hierarchy but only has 'Environmental' POS functions.
- **Stony Rise** – POS diversity could be improved, as the suburb has a couple Local parks and Regional level Kelcey Tier Reserve; however only 'Semi-natural' and 'Environmental' functions.
- **Tugrah** – is mostly rural/agricultural lands with the only POS being Kelcey Tier Reserve (Regional and Environmental).
- **Miandetta** – is mostly comprised of Local level spaces, with only one District and no Regional level POS. Diversity of functions is ok, but is lacking in Sporting POS.
- **Don** – is mostly rural/agricultural lands, but has some Local spaces and Regional level POS along the river, and has a good diversity of POS functions.
- **Ambleside** – POS diversity could be improved, as the suburb has a couple Local parks and District POS along the river, but only 'Semi-natural' and 'Environmental' functions.

5 Sisitha Jayasinghe, Emily J Flies, Robert Soward, Dave Kendal, Michelle Kilpatrick, Timothy P. Holloway, Kira A.E. Patterson, Kiran D.K Ahuja, Roger Hughes, Nuala M. Bryne and Andrew P. Hills. (2022) A Spatial Analysis of Access to Physical Activity Infrastructure and Healthy Food in Regional Tasmania. Front. Public Health, 01 December 2021 | https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.773609.

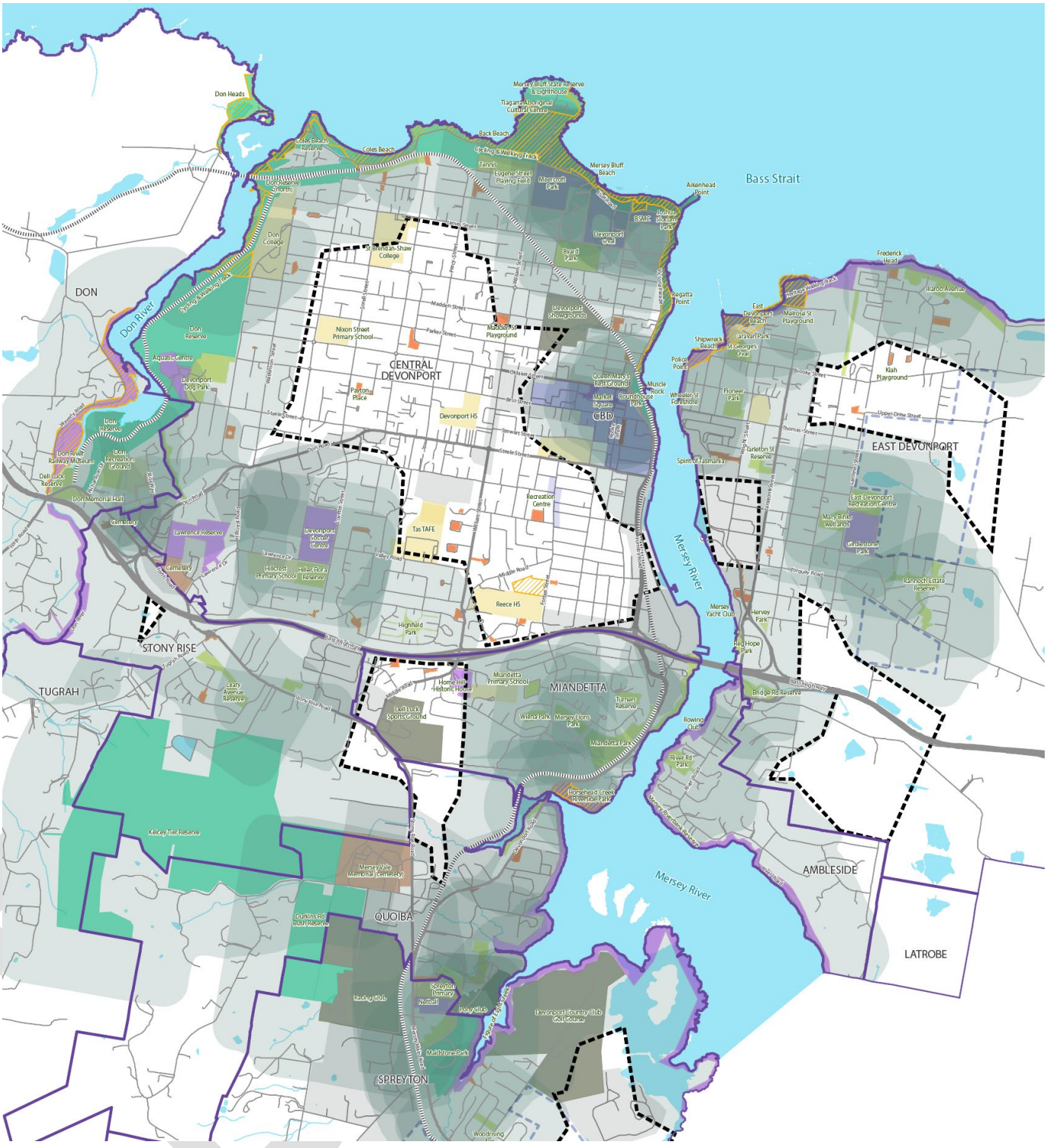


*Figure 11 Gaps in POS Provision Map (refer Appendix A-3 for larger maps)*

# 12. Recommendations

## 12.1 General Municipal-wide Recommendations

Below recommendations aim to improve the provision, diversity and access to POS across the municipality. Specific recommendations for each suburb are outlined in Section 10.2.

### POS Provision

Quality, diversity and accessibility of public open spaces is key to fostering healthy, vibrant, resilient communities. To align with the CCOSP or other relevant strategies and to ensure suitable provision of public open space the following is recommended:

- Retain and enhance existing significant environment POS e.g. Kelcey Tier Reserve, Don Reserve, Hiller Flora Reserve, Bicentennial Park, and all foreshore and riverbank POS.
- In line with the report by Sisitha et al[6] new open spaces should be provided in areas where the DOSS gap analysis indicates limited POS within a 400m catchment and/or ensure access and connections to existing POS.
- POS should be evenly distributed across central, west and south areas of Devonport.
- Increase POS resource allocation to improve facilities appropriate to meet Devonport's future demographics, including more youth and older adults.
- Provide free and accessible POS infrastructure to support those of lower incomes to access physical activity options that do not require booking fees or memberships.
- Improve the quality of existing and future POS via capital works and embellishments (e.g. play areas, seating, shade, signage, drinking fountains).
- Commercial/Industrial zoned areas should provide POS for workers in the area or for local use, and to provide broader environmental values.
- Strong planning controls should be in place to ensure suitably wide corridors along riverbanks and coastal edges, to provide public access and protect natural values.
- Some POS areas are zoned General Residential (no permit required) which provides limited protection under the Devonport Planning Scheme; therefore a review is recommended to apply an Open Space Zone instead.
- The city is made of large blocks frequently broken up by cul-de-sacs which has resulted in numerous Pocket Parks (POS less than 0.5Ha in size) which are excluded from DOSS POS calculations. To improve gaps in POS provision (particularly in Central Devonport) it is recommended Council expand the size of these spaces through acquisition of adjoining properties if they become available for sale ore redevelopment. As suggested in the CCOSP, 'a codified approach to this planning in the subdivision or development stage, could prompt discussions with landowners and coordinate development to the Council's advantage.'

### POS Access

It is important to provide safe and accessible connections between POS and urban areas. The following recommendations align with the Devonport RNS and aim to improve walking and cycling access to POS (refer **Figure 12** for proposed access locations).

- Track and trail networks should connect to the broader region and planned in consultation with regional bodies and neighbouring LGAs.
- Improve access and connectivity between POS along the foreshore and riverbanks.
- Maintain and enhance river ferry crossing opportunities to link East and Central Devonport POS areas.
- Consider a street tree planting program to green and cool active transport routes within the CBD and across Central Devonport.
- Improve Bass Highway Bridge path connections to enhance connectivity and reduce barriers to access POS.

6 Sisitha Jayasinghe, Emily J Flies, Robert Soward, Dave Kendal, Michelle Kilpatrick, Timothy P. Holloway, Kira A.E. Patterson, Kiran D.K Ahuja, Roger Hughes, Nuala M. Bryne and Andrew P. Hills. (2022) A Spatial Analysis of Access to Physical Activity Infrastructure and Healthy Food in Regional Tasmania. Front. Public Health, 01 December 2021 | https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.773609.

- Consider POS needs for community members aged 60+ (i.e. shaded walking routes with frequent spacing of seating and resting points).

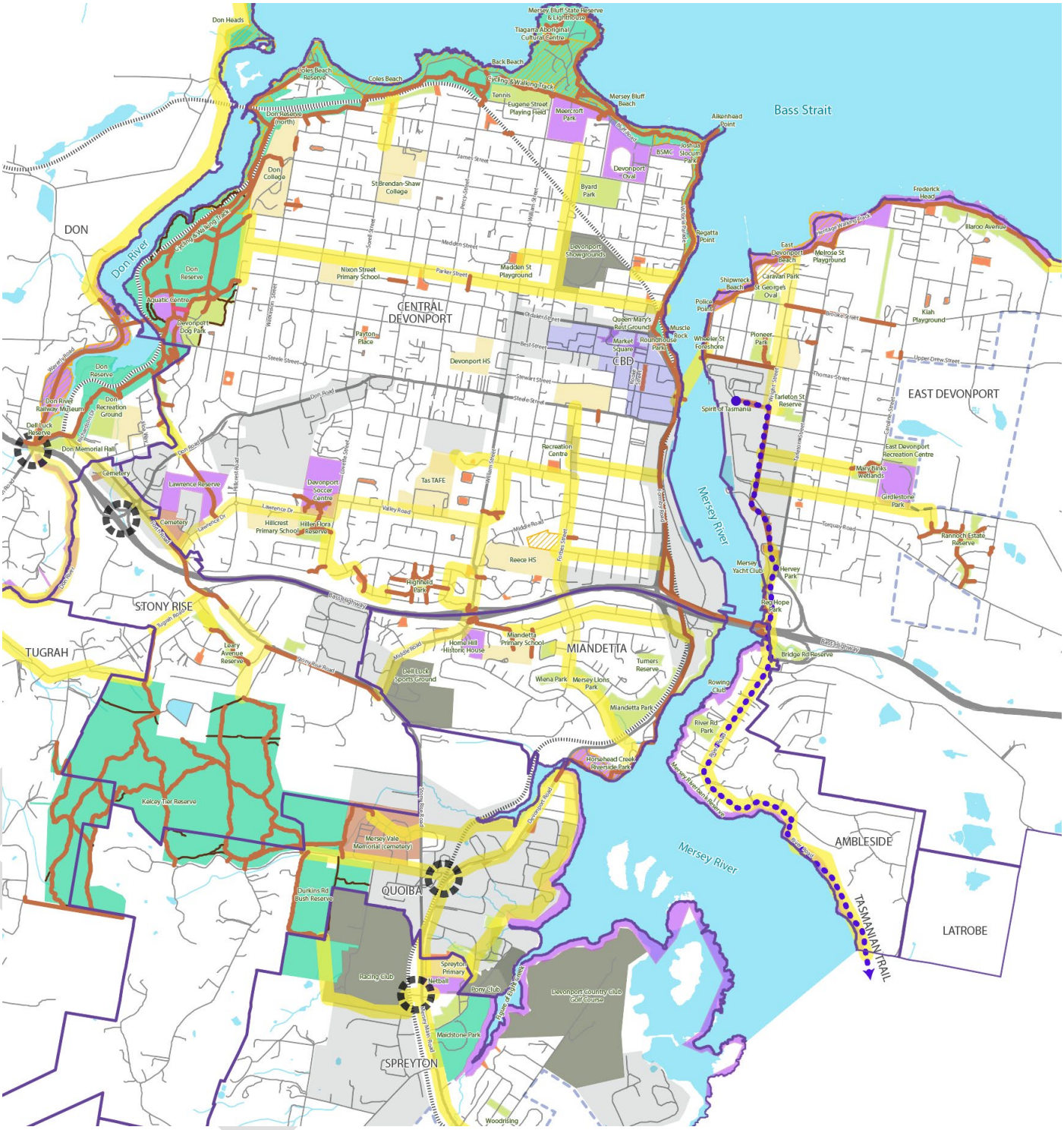


*Figure 12 POS Access Map (refer Appendix A-3 for larger maps)*

## 12.2 Specific Suburb Recommendations

### 12.2.2 Central Devonport

Engagement findings

The community love the natural beauty, access for dogs, new and clean facilities, green grass, beautiful views, river/beach, that it's peaceful, calm and well-maintained.

While many responses indicated that the level of service expectation was being met and that the areas are 'perfect as is', suggestions for encouraging people to stay longer include more play equipment in some areas, skate parks and bicycle facilities, shade and shelter, lighting in specific areas and food or drink options.

Gap analysis findings

- Gaps in POS provision indicate additional POS is needed in the central and south-east areas of the suburb. Opportunity for future POS provision could be considered by expanding existing Pocket Parks (as described in General Recommendations). There is also opportunity for Council to work with schools for public access of their open spaces; however, this cannot be relied upon to address Council's POS provision, as Private spaces are excluded from the DOSS.
- Significant portions of Crown land along the foreshore are excluded from the DOSS POS calculations (along the Mersey River and parts of Mersey Bluff and Coles, Back and Bluff Beaches). However, these spaces are significant for Devonport's POS network and foreshore environment; therefore, it is recommended management arrangements with DCC & Crown ensure POS quality, facilities and public use meet the needs of a Regional level POS.
- Devonport Showgrounds is Private land and therefore excluded from DOSS POS calculations. However, proposed changes to convert to residential should provide adequate POS to improve the POS provision in Central Devonport.
- Only 2 playgrounds exist (Madden St and Mersey Bluff) in the north only. Incorporate playgrounds in the south/west areas into future/existing POS.
- Continue to implement park Master Plan objectives for Highfield Park to improve POS quality.
- Don Reserve should continue to provide Regional level POS quality for its significant environmental and public use values. Continue to implement objectives of the Environmental Management Plan.
- Don River Railway and Museum is excluded from POS calculations; however it is a key visitor attraction and the POS quality and facilities surrounding it should be enhanced.
- The Aquatic Centre has surrounding POS, but the building/facility itself is not included in the DOSS POS calculations.

Access

- Provide a north-south route to connect POS (the Bluff, Meercroft and Byard Parks) to the Showgrounds and the CBD.
- Provide east to west connections to link POS areas between Don Reserve to Roundhouse Park/Victoria Parade.
- Improve access and connecting walking/cycling routes to link various POS areas in the south – from the Mersey River, to the TAFE, Hilcrest Primary School and west to the Don River. Consider options for placemaking/art with community input.

### 12.2.1 East Devonport

Engagement findings

Respondents love the large, open areas that they can walk, ride and spend time in. Key words included calm, peaceful, accessible, clean and nice. Values such as open space, variety of space and amenity were all strong themes with the community sentiment.

Improvements to pavement upgrades and additional BBQs and play equipment to suit all ages would encourage people to stay longer.

Gap analysis findings

- Gaps in POS provision indicate additional POS is needed in the north-central and south-central areas of the suburb.
- In the north, POS along the coast is a series of Local sized land parcels; however, together they make up an linear foreshore reserve and therefore are categorized as District hierarchy to acknowledge the broader catchment potential. POS can be improved particularly for the beaches and heritage walking track to attract more than local use.
- In the west is largely port and industrial uses, where POS can be improved. In particular at the Port where the Spirit of Tasmania is key for visitor arrivals and their first impression of Devonport.
- Continue to implement the park Master Plan objectives for Pioneer Park.
- 3 playgrounds provided in the north only. Incorporate playgrounds in the south/central areas into future/existing POS where required.

Access findings

- Provide a full walking and cycling route along the Bass Strait foreshore and the Mersey River (around the Port).
- Path connections to Latrobe LGA is important along the coastline.
- Provide safe walking/cycling along Wright St to Tarleton St, under the Bass Hwy and south along River Road. Opportunity to link to the Heritage Walking Track in the north, via Wright St north of the Port.
- Provide east-west connections from the Mersey River industrial area to Girdlestone Park and Rannoch Reserve.

### 12.2.3 Ambleside

Engagement findings

The respondents value the walking and cycling access that the path along River Road provides in both access and natural values.

Improvements in this area would include maintenance and safety works along the path including barriers separating from the road.

Gap analysis findings

- No gaps in POS provision, assuming public access and use of the Mersey Riverbank Reserve.
- Improve POS quality and amenities for local parks and the Mersey Riverbank Reserve.
- No playgrounds provided. Incorporate into future/existing POS.

Access

- Maintain walking/cycling access along River Road and the Mersey River to connect with Latrobe LGA and improve this section of the Northwest Coastal Pathway.

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### 12.2.4 Don

Engagement findings

Community responses indicate strong values towards the natural environment and appreciation of these spaces that are so close to the city centre and accessible. The natural beauty, trees, nature noises, wildlife, indigenous plants are all enjoyed and valued by users.

Improvements include more facilities at Dell Luck Reserve, seating and lighting, toilets and wider paths.

Gap analysis findings

- As the suburb is predominantly zoned rural/agricultural, provision of future POS will only be required if land is re-zoned for residential purposes.
- For POS on the west side of Don River, Council currently only leases the path. Recommend expanding the lease area, as an action in the Don Reserve EMP to enhance Council's ability to maintain and/or improve this POS asset.

Access

- Provide improved access and connections from Don River Railway and Dell Luck Reserve to the east.
- Contribute to the CCOSP recommendation, to provide an unbroken coastal path from Port Sorell to Stanley, by providing missing connections along the western edge of the Don River and along the coast through Lillico.
- Provide walking/cycling access via the proposed Don River Rail Trail path connection, connecting Don Reserve south to Tugrah and Kelcey Tier Reserve.

### 12.2.5 Stony Rise

Engagement findings

People who use this area love having open space close to their homes, they appreciate the natural values, that it's quiet, scenic and safe. It's peaceful, close and a great area for exercising.

Improvements include play equipment and BBQs with a focus on being family friendly.

Gap analysis findings

- Gaps in POS provision indicate additional POS is needed in the west and east edges of the suburb, particularly if new residential development is proposed.
- A large portion of Kelcey Tier Reserve is in within the suburb, providing important Regional POS. Continue to implement actions from the Master Plan and Bushfire Management Plan.
- Improve quality and facilities provided in existing POS for local us (i.e..Leary Ave Reserve is located in new residential area, but only provides grass and trees (minimal public use amenities). Improve POS quality & offer for local residents.
- No playgrounds provided. Incorporate into future/existing POS.

Access

- Provide missing access links to Leary Avenue and to Kelcey Tier Reserve.
- Provide walking/cycling access via the proposed Don River Rail Link path connection.
- Improve the POS access barrier under the Bass Highway at Don Road.

### 12.2.6 Miandetta

Engagement findings

The community have a strong connection to the natural values of this area. The nature, trees and open space are highly valued. They also love the playgrounds, it's away from the road and has access to amenities including food and drinks. The open space is family friendly and encourages ball sports and exercise.

Improvements in these spaces include dog exercising areas, more tables and shade, BBQs and a pump track.

Gap analysis findings

- Gaps in POS provision indicate additional POS is needed in the western edge of the suburb, particularly if new residential development is proposed.
- Improve quality and facilities provided in existing POS for local use (e.g. Wierna, Mersey Lions, Miandetta Parks).
- Only one playground exists in Miandetta Park.

Access

- Improve walking/cycling access and connections through existing POS spaces and linking to the Mersey River.
- Opportunity in the long-term to provide continuous public access along the western edge of the Mersey River.
- Linear POS along the west edge of the Mersey River (south of the Bass Hwy) is behind industrial area and therefore difficult for public access. Protect for river environmental qualities in this POS, and if rezoned in future, provide community access and connections along the riverbank.
- Horsehead Creek Riverside Park (Boat Ramp) is excluded from POS calculations as it is Crown land; however, this open space could be improved to provide community use and amenity and water access to the Mersey River.

### 12.2.7 Quoiba

Engagement findings

The community love the natural values and appreciate the access to mountain bike trails and walking options that are so close to town. It's quiet, peaceful and has beautiful views.

Improvements suggested are more amenities at Horsehead Creek, more trails and improved maintenance on existing trails. Better car parking was also highlighted to improve access.

Gap analysis findings

- Mainly rural and industrial/commercial zoned, with some areas of residential in the north.
- Gaps in POS provision indicate additional POS is needed in the northern edge of the suburb, particularly if new residential development is proposed.
- Parts of Kelcey Tier Reserve and all of Durkins Road Reserve provide Regional level POS in the suburb. Implement actions from the Kelcey Tier Reserve Master Plan and Bushfire Management Plan.
- Quality of existing POS in the south and east of the suburb should be improved.
- Protect and enhance environmental POS along the Mersey River edge and consider providing continuous public access along the riverbank.
- POS calculations exclude Mersey Vale cemetery.
- No playgrounds provided. Incorporate into future/existing POS.

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Access

- Improve the access barrier (rail line and Devonport Road) to POS areas (e.g. Mersey River and Kelcey Tier Reserve).

### 12.2.8 Spreyton

Engagement findings

The community love the natural values, the grassed areas for recreation, the accessibility and convenience and the bike facilities.

Improvements include a strong desire for a dog exercise facility, more landscaping, seats and play equipment. There were also some connectivity improvements that could be made to increase accessibility.

Gap analysis findings

- Gap analysis excludes rural/agricultural zoned land.
- There is a lack of POS if new residential development is proposed.
- Maidstone Park provides Regional level POS facilities, but POS quality, amenities and public access could be improved (i.e. ground hire fees apply) in line with the recommendations of the Sports Infrastructure Master Plan
- Improve the quality of existing POS (i.e. Maidstone Park) and improve the connectivity and use of the various POS land parcels through collective planning and vision for future residential use.
- Note: the Pony Club is excluded from POS calculations.
- Only one playground exists in Maidstone Park.

Access

- Protect and enhance environmental POS along the Mersey River edge and consider providing continuous public access along the riverbank.
- Consider access south of the Racing Club, to link to Durkins Reserve.
- Improve the access barrier (rail line and Mersery Main Road) to POS areas (e.g. Durkins and Kelcey Tier Reserves)

### 12.2.9 Tugrah

Engagement findings

People love the natural values of this area and appreciate the access to mountain bike trails and walking options that are so close to town. It's quiet, peaceful and has beautiful views.

Improvements in this area include more trails and improved maintenance on existing trails. Better car parking was also highlighted to improve access.

Gap analysis findings

- As the suburb is predominantly zoned rural/agricultural, provision of future POS will only be required if land is re-zoned for residential purposes.
- Implement actions from the Kelcey Tier Reserve Master Plan, e.g. Turgah Rd Track Head, park entries and access.

**Access**

- Provide walking/cycling access via the proposed Don River Rail Trail path connection.

## 13. Balancing conservation with usage

Given the high number of engagement responses the environment is a key aspect that people love about their open spaces, the DOSS provides the following analysis and recommendations about balancing conservation with public use of POS areas.

There are various demands for using POS for recreation, social gatherings (picnics, bbqs, parties) and periodic larger events (e.g. music, food, markets, tourism sport). These events encourage broader regional and intrastate visitors as well as contributing to a sense of community within Devonport by encouraging recreational interaction and social connectedness.

There are also many significant species and environmental values within Devonport and integrating ecological improvements into the DOSS will further ensure these species survive into the future. By identifying areas of conservation priority, areas can be identified to achieve community needs without conflicting with conservation requirements.

**Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) Student Research Paper on Bio-Connectivity**

A small RMIT student team was requested to assist with this component of the DOSS and to investigate opportunities to enhance bio-connectivity in Devonport through POS planning (refer **Appendix A-5** for the full RMIT report).

As outlined in Council's Environment Strategy 2019-2024, key threats to Devonport's biodiversity include:

- Urban development – including encroachment of private properties into bushland, unauthorised clearing and poisoning of native vegetation, and creation of new tracks in bushland reserves
- Invasive flora and fauna – including damage from uncontrolled domestic pets, impact of introduced species, the spread of weeds, and the dumping of domestic refuse in or near bushland reserves
- Increased native plant and animal diseases
- Increased frequency and intensity of bushfires
- Climate change and urban heating

The LGA's two largest formal reserve areas – Don Reserve and Kelcey Tier Greenbelt – are of particularly high conservation value and support significant remnant vegetation and faunal communities.

In addition to the area's large reserves, remnant vegetation is also found within smaller reserves, and unreserved areas on public and private land. These areas strengthen local habitat and biodiversity connections, as well as providing numerous public benefits such as shade, connection to nature, and contribution to neighbourhood landscape character. Therefore it is important to design and plan for sustainability, biodiversity and resilience, in particular for new development and residential areas.

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### Recommendations to enhance biodiversity

The RMIT research identified key recommendations for the DOSS to enhance biodiversity:

- Continue to implement the actions of the Environment Strategy 2019 – 2024, to conserve biodiversity and protect riparian and coastal areas, and waterways.
- Prepare environmental management plans for sites containing significant environmental values, such as presence of a threatened species, and particularly high use sites to ensure use and management is sensitive to environmental values.
- Avoid clearing and removal of existing native vegetation, and damage to native vegetation adjacent to locations of POS upgrade and maintenance works.
- Provide suitable access to environmental POS and river corridors for passive enjoyment, while maintaining their existing natural character, values and biodiversity.
- Utilise sustainable materials and maintenance or management methods in all POS designs and upgrades.
- Provide or improve habitat links via provision of additional POS and/or improvements to existing POS and connections.
- Increase community education, awareness, and involvement to improve biodiversity outcomes.
- Protect and retain mature trees, as they remain viable in the landscape, and shade footpaths and roads by planting larger canopied species in wider nature strips.
- Implement Council's Tree Policy including maintaining existing trees and wildlife corridors between bushland areas for biodiversity and habitat, requiring developer-funded new tree planting as part of developments and subdivisions, and ensuring trees are protected during works.
- Enhance boundaries surrounding areas that necessitate turfed lawn (spaces used by sporting clubs, schools) by incorporating garden beds with native flora and diverse vegetation structure.
- Incorporate nesting boxes in green spaces that lack mature trees and tree hollows to improve connectivity for bird and mammal species.
- Some community members identified Collage Court, Dahlia Court, Orion Court as spaces that require enhancement, such as additional tree plantings and other native vegetation to support biodiversity and community enjoyment.
- Implement place-based Integrated Water Management plans in priority public open spaces to reduce dependence on potable water supply and keep public spaces green, cool, and improve community health (e.g. via stormwater harvesting, use of reclaimed water or raw water projects)
- Develop ESD and WSUD guidelines for POS to encourage sustainable design in public open spaces (e.g. energy, water, materials), to show which water sensitive urban design treatments are suitable for developments and public open spaces, and to mitigate pollutants from urban stormwater entering natural water systems and degrading habitat.
- Provide incentives for developers to demonstrate environmental stewardship. Work with developers and develop stronger requirements to retain and protect existing vegetation (especially natives), remnant vegetation areas and significant trees.
- Utilise Cradle Coast NRM's Local Planting Guide to ensure that selected species are suitable for their proposed location.

# 14. DOSS Action Plan

The DOSS Action Plan sets prioritised targets to realise the strategy objectives, and identifies additional areas of study required. The Action Plan allows community expectations for open spaces to be managed by providing a transparency around Council's intentions for POS improvements.

The actions are prioritised over a 10-year timeframe as follows:

- **Short** term: 1-2 years
- **Medium** term: 2-5 years
- **Long** term: 5-10 years
- **Ongoing**: Council's annual recurrent and capital works programs

Various Council departments are responsible for actions (e.g. Infrastructure and Works, Parks and Gardens, Governance, Natural Resources, Sports & Recreation, Statutory Planning, Strategic Planning, Communications & Marketing, and Community Development).

Allocation of suitable funds and resources will influence the proposed timeframes, including Council revenue, POS contributions collection, funding grants, and any land-use changes.

***Table 5 DOSS Action Plan – General POS Actions***

| No. | Action | Priority / Timeframe | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Goal 1 - Equitable and Diverse** | | | |
| 1.1 | Provide additional POS in areas identified in the DOSS Gaps Analysis. In terms of Hierarchy, more District/Local size spaces are needed. In terms of Function, more Parks & Gardens and Cultural/Special Purpose POS types are needed. | Long | City Growth |
| 1.2 | Maintain and enhance large open spaces, walking tracks and play areas – and provide additional ones where required (in particular nature-based and all-abilities). | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| 1.3 | Increase POS resource allocation to improve facilities and services appropriate to meet Devonport's future demographics and vulnerable community cohorts (e.g. elderly, women, youth). | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| 1.4 | Provide free and accessible POS infrastructure to support those of lower incomes to access physical activity options that do not require booking fees or memberships. | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works, Community Services |
| 1.5 | Commercial and Industrial zoned areas should provide POS for workers and/or for local use, and to provide broader environmental values. | Long | City Growth |
| **Goal 2 - Connected and Accessible** | | | |
| 2.1 | Implement recommendations from DOSS Gaps in POS Access (Section 10) to improve access to POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| 2.2 | Continue to improve cycling and walking connections. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| 2.3 | Address POS access barriers at major road and rail lines (i.e. Bass Highway and Devonport Road). | Long | Infrastructure and Works |

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| 2.4 | Widen the POS corridors along the coast and on both banks of Don, Mersey and Forth Rivers to improve public use and protect natural values (CCSOP). | Long | City Growth |
| **Goal 3 - Safe and Healthy** | | | |
| 3.1 | Undertake a POS safety assessment of existing public open spaces and sporting precincts to ensure CPTED principles are incorporated. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| 3.2 | Incorporate climate change, risk and fire management implications into future POS plans. | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works |
| 3.3 | Provide POS needs for community members aged 60+ (i.e. shaded walking routes with frequent spacing of seating and resting points). | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works |
| 3.4 | Improve POS quality via capital works and embellishments (e.g. play areas, seating, tables, shelters, signage, barbecues, drinking fountains). | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| **Goal 4 - Social and Cultural** | | | |
| 4.1 | Improve POS infrastructure to support social gatherings (e.g. seating, tables, toilets, barbecues and shelters). Provide seating along walking tracks for elderly. | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works |
| 4.2 | Develop an annual POS art and events program - collaborate with other authorities, artists and community groups to support public art and develop an annual program of events in public open spaces. | Long | Community Services, paranaple Arts Centre |
| 4.3 | Prepare a Traditional Owner Involvement Plan - to support engagement, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting processes to increase participation with Aboriginal communities in POS management and projects. | Long | Community Services |
| **Goal 5 - Sustainable and Conserved** | | | |
| 5.1 | Maintain and enhance the natural environment for community access whilst ensuring conservation (refer Section 13 for specific biodiversity recommendations). | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| 5.2 | Implement exiting and prepare new environmental management plans for sites containing significant environmental values. | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works |
| 5.3 | Develop ESD and WSUD guidelines and Integrated Water Management plans for POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| 5.4 | Provide or improve habitat links via provision of additional POS and/or improvements to existing POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| 5.5 | Utilise sustainable materials and maintenance or management methods in all POS designs and upgrades. | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works |
| 5.6 | Provide incentives for developers to demonstrate environmental stewardship and develop stronger requirements to retain and protect existing vegetation and mature trees. | Medium | City Growth |
| 5.7 | Utilise Cradle Coast NRM's Local Planting Guide to ensure that selected species are suitable for their proposed location. | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works |
| 5.8 | Incorporate climate change research and actions that are intended to mitigate predicted impacts of climate change (e.g. retention of native vegetation for carbon storage, minimising emissions), and those that are aimed at impact adaptation (e.g. the role of foreshore 'buffers' to sea level rise and storm surge) (TAS POS Policy). | Short | Infrastructure and Works |
| 5.9 | Provide interpretive/educational signage for heritage and natural values. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |

| Goal 6 - Managed and Strategic | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6.1 | Devonport Open Space Strategy Action Plan to be put forward to be further supported by the State Government's well-being framework. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| 6.2 | Conduct an existing POS improvement plan, including audits and upgrades processes. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| 6.3 | Council to investigate development of TPP in relation to Health and wellbeing to ensure recreation and open space opportunities are aligned with overarching land use planning provisions. | Medium | City Growth |
| 6.4 | Establish requirements under permit conditions for developers. | Long | City Growth |
| 6.5 | Expand the size of existing Pocket Parks (<0.5Ha) to provide useful POS, through acquisition of adjoining properties. | Long | CIty Growth |
| 6.6 | Introduce a Public Open Space Contributions and Acquisitions Policy and related Monetary Reserves Management Policy in accordance with the Provisions of the Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993. | Medium | City Growth, Development Services |
| 6.7 | Prepare a Planning Scheme Amendment to support the DOSS objectives to rezone Council owned land parcels in General Residential zoning, to Open Space zoning. | Long | City Growth |
| 6.8 | Improve maintenance of POS assets, weeds, grass areas and rubbish. | Ongoing | Infrastructure and Works |

*Table 6 DOSS Action Plan – Specific Suburb POS Actions*

| No. | Action | Priority / Timeframe | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Central Devonport** | | | |
| C.1 | Provide more POS to address the gap in provision in the central and south-eastern parts of the suburb. Opportunity for future POS provision could be considered by expanding existing Pocket Parks. There is also opportunity for Council to work with schools for public access of their open spaces. | Long | CIty Growth, Community Services |
| C.2 | For the foreshore and riverbank reserves, ensure management arrangements between DCC & Crown ensure POS quality, facilities and public use meet the needs of a Regional level POS. | Ongoing | Governance, Infrastructure and Works |
| C.3 | Devonport Showgrounds (if converted to residential) should provide suitable sized POS to improve the gap in POS provision in the area. | Long | City Growth |
| C.4 | Incorporate playgrounds in the south/west areas into future/existing POS, including skate parks. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| C.5 | Improve access to POS from north to south and east to west, as outlined in the POS Access Analysis map. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| C.6 | Provide more bicycle facilities, shade/shelter, lighting in specific areas, and food/drink options. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| **East Devonport** | | | |
| E.1 | Provide more POS in the north-central and south-central areas of the suburb, particularly of Regional hierarchy. | Long | CIty Growth |

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| E.2 | Improve POS quality and assets along the foreshore, including the heritage walking track to attract more than local use. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| E.3 | Incorporate playgrounds in the south/central areas into future/existing POS where required. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| E.4 | Improve access and POS quality near the Port and along the Mersey River | Long | City Growth, Infrastructure and Works |
| E.5 | Provide additional BBQs. | Short | Infrastructure and Works |
| **Ambleside** | | | |
| A.1 | Improve POS quality and amenities for local parks and the Mersey Riverbank Reserve. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| A.2 | Incorporate playgrounds into future/existing POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| | | | |
| **Don** | | | |
| D.1 | Recommend expanding the Council lease area on the west side of Don River for improved POS quality and as an action in the Don Reserve EMP. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works, Governance |
| D.2 | Contribute to the CCOSP recommendation, to provide an unbroken coastal path from Port Sorrel to Stanley, by providing missing connections along the western edge of the Don River and along the coast through Lillico. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| D.3 | Provide walking/cycling access via the proposed Don River Rail Trail path connection, connecting Don Reserve south to Tugrah and Kelcey Tier Reserve. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| D.4 | Provide more facilities at Dell Luck Reserve (e.g. seating, lighting, toilets and wider paths). | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| **Stony Rise** | | | |
| R.1 | Provide more POS to address the gap in provision in the west and east, particularly if new residential development is proposed (of Local and Regional level hierarchy POS that are other than Environmental or Natural POS Functions). | Long | City Growth |
| R.2 | Improve quality and facilities provided in existing POS for local use (i.e..Leary Ave Reserve). | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| R.3 | Incorporate playgrounds into future/existing POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| R.4 | Improve or provide access to Leary Avenue, Kelcey Tier Reserve and Don River Rail Link. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| R.5 | Improve play equipment and BBQs with a focus on being family friendly. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| **Miandetta** | | | |
| M.1 | Provide more POS to address the gap in provision in the west, particularly if new residential development is proposed (of District/Regional level Hierarchy and Sporting POS Function). | Long | City Growth |
| M.2 | Improve quality and facilities provided in existing POS for local use (e.g. Wiena, , Miandetta Parks). | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| M.3 | Incorporate playgrounds into future/existing POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| M.4 | Improve walking/cycling access and connections through existing POS spaces and linking to the Mersey River. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |

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| | | | |
| M.6 | Improvements in these spaces include dog exercising areas, more tables and shade and BBQs. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| **Quoiba** | | | |
| Q.1 | Provide more POS in the north, particularly if new residential development is proposed. | Long | City Growth |
| Q.2 | Quality of existing POS in the south and east of the suburb should be improved. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| Q.3 | Protect and enhance environmental POS along the Mersey River edge and consider providing continuous public access along the riverbank. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| Q.4 | Incorporate playgrounds into future/existing POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| Q.5 | Provide more amenities at Horsehead Creek. Provide better car parking, trails and improved maintenance on existing trails. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| **Spreyton** | | | |
| S.1 | Provide new or convert existing POS to Functions of 'Parks and Gardens' and/or 'Cultural or Special Purpose' types of POS. | Long | Infrastructure and Works, Community Services |
| S.2 | Maidstone Park provides Regional level POS facilities, but POS quality, amenities and public access could be improved (i.e. ground hire fees apply) in line with the recommendations of the Sports Infrastructure Master Plan. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| S.3 | Improve the quality of existing POS (i.e. Maidstone Park) and improve the connectivity and use of the various POS land parcels through collective planning and vision for future residential use. | Medium | City Growth, Infrastructure and Works |
| S.4 | Incorporate playgrounds into future/existing POS. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| S.5 | Protect and enhance environmental POS along the Mersey River edge and consider providing continuous public access along the riverbank. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| S.6 | Consider access south of the Racing Club, to link to Durkins Reserve. Improve the access barrier (rail line and Mersery Main Road) to POS areas (e.g. Durkins and Kelcey Tier Reserves) | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| S.7 | Consider a dog exercise facility, more landscaping, seats and connectivity improvements to increase accessibility. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| **Tugrah** | | | |
| T.1 | Implement actions from the Kelcey Tier Reserve Master Plan, e.g. Turgah Rd Track Head, park entries and access. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |
| T.2 | Provide walking/cycling access via the proposed Don River Rail Trail path connection. | Long | Infrastructure and Works |
| T.3 | Provide better car parking, more trails and improve maintenance on existing trails. | Medium | Infrastructure and Works |

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# Appendices

## A-1 Terms and Abbreviations

A list of terms and abbreviations used within the Devonport Open Space Strategy include:

**Biodiversity** – the variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, aquatic, marine and other ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part), at all levels of organisation, including genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity. Source: Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030.

**CBD** – Central Business District

**CPTED** – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime prevention strategy that focuses on reducing the incidence and fear of crime in planning and design of cities and neighbourhoods.

**Crown land** – Land under Crown tenure/ownership, which is typically publicly accessible and may be considered highly valuable for community use and access. Some areas may be under Council or Committee of Management; however, are not Council owned and therefore not under direct Council control or influence. Therefore, Crown Land NOT

**DOSS** – Devonport Open Space Strategy

**Encumbrance** – a right to, interest in, or legal liability on real property that does not prohibit passing title to the property but that may diminish its value (i.e. an easement).

**Encumbered open space** – land that is constrained for development purposes (e.g. easements for power/transmission lines, sewer, gas, underground services; retarding basins/wetlands; waterways/drainage; landfill; conservation, and protected vegetation or heritage overlay areas). This land can be used for a range of activities (e.g. walking and cycling trails) but is not credited as public open space for public open space contributions.

**Environmental open space** – land in either private or public ownership and/or under Council management (such as environmental zones and offset sites) that has public-use potential, but potentially limited access. These areas protect native vegetation and biodiversity, as well the offset loss of native vegetation in newly developed areas. Their protection provides for and encourages enjoyment by the community in a manner that is sustainable, accessible and protects and enhances their recognised biodiversity, tourism, cultural, heritage and scenic values.

**ESD** – Environmental Sustainable Design

**Formal recreation (organised)** – the activity is organised by a club, association, school or community group and participation is by becoming a member of the club or on a fee-paying basis (e.g. stadiums, aquatic centres, sport facilities/courts for hire). This term covers these uses defined in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme -Devonport: Sports and Recreation.

**GDRGS**-Greater Devonport Residential Growth Strategy (yet to be endorse by Council).

**Informal recreation (non-organised)** – outdoor activities on land open to the public and used by non-paying persons for leisure or recreation, (e.g. cycle track, picnic or barbecue area, playground, and walking or jogging track). This term covers these uses defined in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme -Devonport: Passive Recreation

**IWM** – Integrated water management

**LGA** – Local Government Authority

**LGBMPA**-Local Government Building and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1993

**LPPF** – Local Planning Policy Framework

**LUPAA**- Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993.

**MP** – Master Plan

**Native vegetation** - Plants that are indigenous to Tasmania, including trees, shrubs, herbs, and grasses.

**Playground** - an area designed for children to play freely which is predominately equipment based. Equipment can include a swing set, slide, climber, monkey bars, etc.

**Play space** - an area within public open space, designed for children to play freely which can be either equipment based or a modified landscape or a combination of the two. Landscaping can include a grassed mound, level grassed area for ball games, natural bushland, etc.

**Pocket park** - Open spaces less than 0.5 ha are not classified as POS in the DOSS. These small spaces tend to require considerable Council resources when compared to their negligible contribution to recreation or leisure.

**Private open space** – land that is privately owned or leased, which provides recreation and leisure benefits. This land may be publicly accessible but has limited or restricted access via a fee or membership application. Examples include non-government education facilities, private sports fields, golf courses, racecourses, and private shopping areas. These areas can contribute to the public realm (e.g. biodiversity, amenities, landscape character), but cannot be relied upon as available public open space in the long term, and therefore not included in the DOSS open space calculations.

**Public land** - is specific to land gazetted as public open space in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 section 177A and comprises those parcels of land identified on Council's Public Land register.

**Public open space (POS)** - land in public ownership and/or under public management that is freely accessible and provides recreation, amenity, nature conservation and leisure benefits. This includes public parks, gardens, reserves, waterways, linear corridors for walking and cycling, publicly owned forecourts and squares, and any publicly owned outdoor sporting venues. These spaces are typically reserved in the planning scheme as Recreation and Open Space Zones. It does not include encumbered open space (refer definition above).

**POS catchment** - a 400 metre walking catchment from an existing POS is used to assess gaps in Devonport's POS provision, as 400 metres is widely accepted as a five minute walking distance.[7]

**POS minimum size** - new POS shall be a minimum area of 0.5 hectares (5000m2) and minimum dimension of 20 metres in width (similar to other states and national requirements e.g. NSW Greener Places Design Guide and the Heart Foundation Blueprint for an Active Australia).[8] This ensures sufficient POS area to accommodate demand, functional use, adaptability and long-term maintenance efficiency.

7 Active Healthy Communities PedShed Analysis and Greener Places Design Guide NSW Draft 2020 – Issue no. 04

8 Greener Places Design Guide NSW Draft 2020 – Issue no. 04 and Heart Foundation Blueprint for an Active Australia (Action Area 1 Built Environments)

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**Public open space contributions** – levies to fund open space that can be mandated for developers under the Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993 . Councils commonly seek a monetary contribution to fund public open space when land is subdivided for development. The rate of contribution is generally based on a percentage of land or land value, or a combination of both.

**Recreation facilities** – infrastructure ranging from aquatic centres, playgrounds, sports fields and indoor and outdoor courts that enable people to partake in a recreation or sporting activity.

**Restricted public open space** – land in public ownership and/or under Council management that has public-use potential, but typically limited access. Examples include streetscapes (refer below), government schools, playing fields within the racecourse, cemeteries, transport reservations, public golf course, and encumbered open space (refer definition). These areas may provide some recreational benefit, but they have limited/restricted access and may not always be available for public use (i.e. a retarding basin holding water). These areas are complementary to the open space network; however, do not count towards Council's required public open space contributions.

**Sport** – the Australian Sports Commission defines a sport as: a human activity capable of achieving a result requiring physical exertion and/or physical skill which by its nature and organisation is competitive and generally accepted as being a sport.

**Streetscapes (road reserves)** – primarily transport routes for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, recognised to have amenity, biodiversity, urban cooling and passive open space benefits. Considered complementary to the open space network, providing green links and movement corridors to improve access and walkability. Landscaped areas within road reserves (e.g. nature strips and medians) are maintained by Council and/or adjoining land owners. These areas contribute to open space values, but they are not considered public open space, nor counted towards Council's required public open space contributions.

**Universal design** - the designing of environments for people of all ages and abilities.

**WSUD** – Water sensitive urban design. A sustainable water management approach that aims to provide water quality treatment, flood management and green landscapes. Key principles include minimising water resistant areas; recharging natural groundwater aquifers (where appropriate) by increasing the amount of rain absorbed into the ground; encouraging onsite reuse of rain and incorporation of rain gardens; encouraging onsite treatment to improve water quality and remove pollution, and using temporary rainfall storage (retarding basins or wetlands) to reduce the load on drains.

# A-2 Background Review Summary

## About Devonport

In the 1820s, early European settlement in Devonport was largely for timber and farming, with population only increasing in the 1850s when coal was discovered. In 1890, two townships either side of the Mersey River (Formby and Torquay) joined to become Devonport. Following this, population grew further due to industry, farming, the Launceston railway line opening and the construction of a bridge across the Mersey River. There was further growth and residential development post-war from 1950-1970.

Currently, Devonport is Tasmania's third largest independent city. Surrounding settlements at locations such as Port Sorell, Shearwater, Forth, Spreyton, Latrobe, Ulverstone, Penguin, Sheffield, Railton, Turners Beach and Wilmot rely on Devonport for employment options and higher order social, entertainment, sporting, educational, retail, professional, and health needs.

The Port of Devonport handles a large portion of import and export cargos for Tasmania, and is a key entry point into Tasmania for tourists and locals. The Devonport Airport provides a regular passenger and freight carrying services to mainland Australia.

Major features include the Mersey and Don Rivers, the Mersey Bluff and Lighthouse, Bass Strait Maritime Centre, Paranaple Centre, Don River Railway and Museum, Tasmanian Arboretum, Tiagarra Cultural Centre and Museum, riverfront parks and a new hotel (under construction) with a publicly accessible platform spanning across Formby Road and over the river.

## Growth and future development

### Demographics and trends

From 2016 to 2021, Devonport's resident population has steadily grown from 25,162 to 26,150[9]. The table below provides Devonport's estimated resident population over the last 7 years, indicating an average year on year growth of 165 residents.[10]

| Year | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ERP | 25,128 | 25,217 | 25,413 | 25 633 | 25 747 | 26,150 |

Released in June of 2022, the Greater Devonport Residential Growth Strategy 2021-2041 (GDRGS) adopts a deliberate policy direction for residential growth including the endorsement of a population growth target of 30,000 by the year 2030. The GDRGS identifies emerging anecdotal trends in regional population growth, stating:

> *More recent trends in population growth in the Devonport area are also being reported in regional forums (such as the Regional Australia Institute) which identifies Devonport as performing well in regional growth and also inward migration. This seems generally indicative of a wider recent trend of migration into regional areas. Furthermore, in recent years and following the investment of Council's Living City urban renewal initiative, there is a growing*

[9] 2021 Devonport, Census All persons QuickStats, Australian Bureau of Statistics, retrieved 7 July 2022, https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA61610

[10] Region summary: Devonport(c), Australian Bureau of Statistics, retrieved 7 July 2022, https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=61610

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*sense of renewed economic confidence and subsequent positive growth. This has been reflected through indicators such as increased activity in development applications, property sales, and growing interest in new retail and commercial investments.*

Compared to the national average, of those living in Devonport there is a higher proportion of people aged over 65, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a higher proportion of people who left school before year 10.

The DOSS is important to address population growth and demographic trends, to ensure equitable distribution and access to POS and provide recreational opportunities, natural environment experiences, and social connections for the resultant physical and mental health outcomes of these activities.

***Figure 13 Summary of Devonport demographics (Source: ABS Index of IRSD)***

## Changing lifestyle aspirations

As the latest Covid situation revealed, people moved in unprecedented numbers to regional locations such as Devonport seeking a lifestyle change. The ability to work remotely with ready access to nature and seaports makes Devonport an attractive 'sea change' destination. The growth in land development and urban sprawl has also presented Council with challenges and opportunities in how they will manage POS into the future.

| | Devonport | | Australia |
|---|---|---|---|
| | # | % | % |
| People who left school at Year 9 or below | 4,075 | 16 | 11.3 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples | 1,892 | 7 | 3.3 |
| People aged over 65 years | 5,433 | 21 | 15.7 |
| Private dwellings without internet access | 2,291 | 23 | 14.1 |
| People who speak english not well or not at all | 98 | 0 | 3.1 |

## Visitation and economic opportunities

Devonport currently has a relatively high proportion of day-trip visitation. The Spirit of Tasmania brings interstate visitors to Devonport via the Mersey River. It has long been acknowledged that the more inviting and attractive the waterfront areas on both the East and Western sides of the river are, the more likely visitors are to stay in Devonport. Based on 2013/14 financial year visitation data 88,000 tourists visited Devonport and the northwest Region, spending on average $91.[11]

There is a positive economic result from increasing the public amenity and liveability of a city in attracting new residents. Devonport City Council have identified this in past studies including the Living City Study[12] completed in 2014 and have demonstrated a commitment to these values in projects such as the Coastal Pathway, Bluff Precinct and Devonport Aquatic Centre. Linking these projects via the connections in public open space and having an overarching OSS to create cohesiveness will ensure maximum economic benefit for Devonport.

## Recreational trends

The Devonport Sports Infrastructure Master Plan notes an increase in demand for sporting infrastructure and it assesses sports participation and facilities of 9 sporting precincts across Devonport. The sports assessed include Football (Soccer), Netball, Basketball, Touch Football, Australian Football (AFL), Cricket, Hockey, Tennis, and Volleyball. The report indicates that 52% of the 21 sports analysed have seen at least a 10% increase in membership 2016-2019, with 45% of these increased membership by 20%. At the same time,

11 https://www.livingcitydevonport.com.au/download/135/public-documents/3811/hill-pdaliving-city-regional-benefits-opportunities-report.pdf
12 https://www.livingcitydevonport.com.au/download/135/public-documents/3811/hill-pdaliving-city-regional-benefits-opportunities-report.pdf

there is a nation-wide shift towards self-organised (casual/social) physical activities, such as cycling, running, walking and mountain biking.

### Growth areas and future development

The urban areas within Devonport include a mix of residential, industrial and commercial uses, with a recent Planning Scheme amendment for the rezoning of the former Devonport showgrounds site for residential use in the heart of the study area. In addition, it is understood Council is developing a Residential Development Strategy to inform the future provision and release of residential land in the City. This Strategy will respond to Demographic indicators for supply and demand, development opportunities for infill residential development and potential conversion of zones.

The areas of Devonport, East Devonport and Spreyton make up the most substantial areas of residential density in the Devonport LGA. Rural Living areas are mostly located south of the Bass Highway in the areas of Tugrah, west of Quoiba, South Spreyton and Kelcey Tier, retaining a rural landscape character. According to Council's Greater Devonport Residential Growth Strategy (GDRGS), Rural Living areas have seen the greatest number of dwelling approvals within the Devonport LGA in the last few years.

The GDRGS details ten Investigation areas to accommodate Devonport's future growth for both the General Residential and Rural Living Zones. The spatial distribution of these areas is predominantly in the south-western section of the LGA. For future open space planning in these areas the following should be considered:

- A future public open space acquisitions and contributions policy should contain strong recommendations for the provision of land for open space opportunities in the investigation areas of the GDRGS for potential General Residential Zoning. Tthese areas are removed from the current concentration of residential development and Council owned land.
- For land that has potential for inclusion in the Rural Living Zone, larger lot sizes would lessen the need for community park areas. Utilisation of opportunities for cash in lieu contributions or for trail connections to adjoining areas would be an opportunity to explore further.

Differences within suburb boundaries between these two Census years make it difficult to compare population change by suburb. However, allowing for these changes it is considered that there is an obvious increase in the suburbs of Tugrah (by 87.7%) and the Don.[13] However moving forward, the GDRDS has ambitious plans to attract residents and suitable open space areas need to be provided.

It is important to accommodate different types and sizes of development which are supported by sufficient infrastructure, services and amenity. Therefore, the DOSS provides an assessment of open space needs and preferred open space forms in these new growth areas, and makes recommendations regarding appropriate open space contribution levels and mechanisms for acquisition.

As mentioned above, of particular note to this Strategy, is the recent proposed amendment of the Planning Scheme for the rezoning of the Devonport Showgrounds from Recreation to General Residential, and the incorporation of a Specific Area Plan to guide this. The amendment is entering the public hearings phase of assessment by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. It seeks to rezone CT52055/1 86A Gunn Street, Devonport from the Recreation Zone to the General Residential Zone and insert the Devonport Showgrounds Redevelopment Specific Area Plan into the Planning Scheme. The surrounding

13 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Search Census data. Retrieved from https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

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development mostly consists of established residential development, while the Devonport CBD is located approximately 250m south and the bank of the Mersey River is located approximately 350m east.

It is acknowledged that there are other areas of significant urban growth, however this site represents a significant opportunity for urban in-fill development to facilitate increased housing supply and introduces a substantial amount of land zoned for open space purposes in the central Devonport area. It is likely that further areas currently in other zoning such as industrial may be considered as potential for infill residential development. The recommendations contained in this Strategy considers the Showgrounds site and other land advised located on 117 Tasman Street, as having such potential.

## Current academic research in the Region

### Barriers and enablers to physical activity in regional Tasmania[14]

In this study on the barriers and enablers to physical activity in regional Tasmania, Jayasinghe et al (2022) have described a community and neighbourhood in a post COVID world which have more physical activity patterns and are to be subject to more influential communal activity and social engagement patterns. Within an urban environment, if the access to open space and physical activity areas is highly integrated, it has been proven that there is a direct correlation to activity and engagement.

As expected, subsequently, in regional towns that have a lower degree of open space and physical activity integrated, it has been found that residents in these areas are faced with different challenges in maintaining an active lifestyle. The study was a rating survey which looked at physical activity infrastructure, environment and for a range of community members that resided in the Burnie, Devonport or Circular Head LGA's.

The results of the survey concluded that most respondents were living in detached housing with access to a motor vehicle, and that a high degree of the physical activity infrastructure in NW Tasmania was available, with approximately 30% of this being free for users. Furthermore, it was concluded that the quality of infrastructure, proximity, availability and safety, traffic, infrastructure preference and visual aesthetic and maintenance were all highly rated as adequate or preferred by the respondents. Areas that have a lesser aesthetic or are subject to graffiti and crime having a lower degree of outdoor exercise present due to lack of adequate lighting and personal safety perceptions. This suggests that accessibility is not considered as a primary barrier to physical activity for the region.

The survey drew a distinction between the situation before and after the COVID pandemic, people reported uninhibited physical activity routines during lockdown, for which the long term outcomes are still unknown. The accessibility of open space and physical activity by residents is fundamentally connected to characteristics pertaining to the neighbourhood environment. For the three LGAs subject to the surveys, it was concluded that there was a wide variety of high quality physical activity infrastructure, and a widespread appreciation of the infrastructure. Subsequently, it has been identified that it may be a behavioural shift that is required in order to facilitate more physical activity in the residents in these LGA's supported by a range of environmental, social and policy legislative changes. These findings are noted in terms of the opportunity to understand and influence community behaviour and encourage spaces that respond to people's experience and identity.

[14] Sisitha Jayasinghe, Robert Soward, Timothy P. Holloway, Kira A.E. Patterson, Kiran D.K Ahuja, Roger Hughes, Nuala M. Bryne and Andrew P. Hills. (2022) *Why some do but too many don't? Barriers and enablers to physical activity in regional Tasmania – an exploratory, mixed-methods study*. BMC Public Health 22:627. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13001-6

### Spatial Analysis of Access to Physical Activity Infrastructure and Healthy Food in Regional Tasmania [15]

This paper investigated the spatial access of communities in regional Tasmania, including Devonport, to locations for physical activity and healthy food. The literature has noted that when access to physical activity infrastructure (PAI) and healthy food is reduced there is a correlation with physical inactivity and obesity. There are 78 physical activity infrastructure sites in Devonport (including open spaces, gyms, fitness centres and schools), and 26 healthier food outlets (supermarkets, specialty food stores, fruit and vegetable markets).

Of relevance to the DOSS is the average distance to natural amenity/ green space and recreational tracks, which are 3.41 and 2.76 km respectively. The accepted Australian standard is generally that physical activity infrastructure be within 800m (10-minute walk) of residents, and the literature has indicated that distances of 300-400m have substantial health benefits.

Open spaces also provide opportunities for sporting activities that are less common in more remote areas. This study does note that "for effective public health promotion and sustainable reduction of obesity prevalence, a better understanding of preferences and patterns of utilization of open spaces is required". The actionable strategies recommended by the article for strategic and policy levels of government are:

1. Increase public awareness of available PAI—particularly the free-to-access natural amenities and green space.
2. Increase connectivity between PAI resources through provision of better transport options.
3. Nutrition education and increased public awareness of Tier 1 food outlets.

Potential recommendations for the Devonport Open Space Strategy include prioritising new open space provision in areas where there is limited physical activity opportunities within a walkable catchment or ensuring that public transport options connect with open spaces for those over 400m from a space, consistent with previous recommendations.

## Policy and strategy context

The Devonport Open Space Strategy (DOSS) acts as an overarching planning document for all Council strategies and documents related to public open space (POS). Key documents reviewed are summarised below.

### Tasmanian open space policy and planning framework

The Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework (TOSPF)was prepared by Inspiring Place Pty Ltd with HM Leisure Planning Pty Ltd, with the aim of facilitating good open space planning and for a more state-wide approach. The work was undertaken in 2010 and prepared for Sport and Recreation Tasmania, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts16 to correspond to the timing of the work undertaken under the Regional Planning Initiatives. The purpose of the project was to provide policy guidance and establish a framework for open space planning. This was to benefit the sustainable development and maintenance of a comprehensive open space system, and

15 Sisitha Jayasinghe, Emily J Flies, Robert Soward, Dave Kendal, Michelle Kilpatrick, Timothy P. Holloway, Kira A.E. Patterson, Kiran D.K Ahuja, Roger Hughes, Nuala M. Bryne and Andrew P. Hills. (2022) A Spatial Analysis of Access to Physical Activity Infrastructure and Healthy Food in Regional Tasmania. Front. Public Health, 01 December 2021 | https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.773609.
16 https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/policy/premiers_health_and_wellbeing_advisory_council

to bring a clear focus to the delivery of open space infrastructure by Councils, the State and Federal Governments.

In summary the document provides the following:

- A definition of open space
- A description of the benefits of its provision
- Trends that influence open space provision
- Issues around open space planning
- Stakeholder views

Four principle objectives were formulated to support the following vision:

"Tasmania will have a diverse, comprehensive, and sustainable open space system, providing health and well-being, environmental, sport and recreation, social, and economic benefits. The Tasmanian open space system will be developed and managed in response to the needs of the community and visitors, whilst respecting our unique environment."17

A total of 60 recommendations were set out, grouped to cover policy areas of planning and governance, land management, training and education, design, marketing and promotion. It is noted that this document is now a decade old and considerable changes have been experienced in Tasmania since its publication.

The DOSS meets the objectives of the TOSFP to further provide policy guidance and maintain the open space network as an integrated system, not as independent spaces.

### Other relevant State Government initiatives

Tasmania's first Wellbeing Framework

On the 4th May 2022, Tasmania's new Premier the Hon Jeremy Rockliff, announced his Government's commitment to developing the State's first Wellbeing Framework. The aim of this framework is to ensure wellbeing priorities are embedded in the Government's targets, measures, policies and services and will be launched later in 2022[18]. There is an opportunity for Devonport to demonstrate a similar commitment to Community wellbeing and as a potential opportunity for funding for implementation of actions. Council has commenced development of a health and wellbeing plan.

Premier's Health and Well Being Advisory Council

The Tasmania Statement – Working together for the Health and Wellbeing of Tasmanians was originally signed in 2019 and updated in August 2021. This Statement commits to a collaborative approach towards long term solutions to improve the health of Tasmanians by addressed social and economic influencing factors. Tasmania's open spaces are recognised here as a key to supporting the continuing improvement of health and wellbeing. The Statement includes the recognition that:

"We have an opportunity as Tasmania grows, to plan our communities in a way that creates healthy, liveable and connected spaces"

The Health and Well being Advisory Council (Department of Premier and Cabinet) has also been established to facilitate cross-sector approaches to achieve the vision of being the healthiest population by 2025.[19]

### Tasmanian Planning Policies

The Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPP) are intended to be a new part of Tasmania's land use planning system, a scoping paper has been released by the Minister for Local Government and input was invited about the topics and issues to be included. This draft scoping paper

17 https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/14527/Tasmanian_Open_Space_Policy_-_Summary.pdf
18 Premier of Tasmania - Progressing Tasmania's first Wellbeing Framework
19

indicates that Liveable Settlements has been identified as a potential topic to guide the development of a TPP and issues to be addressed under this topic could be:

- Planned and contained settlements
- Pleasant places to live – amenity and avoiding land use conflicts
- Integrating land use and transport
- Health and wellbeing – recreation and open space opportunities
- Community – health services and education

The draft TPPs will be released for public exhibition for comment on their content and implementation statements, following a report and recommendations considering this by the Tasmanian Planning Commission they will come into effect and will inform the review and revision of the regional land use strategies.

There is the opportunity to align the Devonport Open Space Strategy with this process to ensure it is consistent with these overarching land use planning provisions.

**Regional Land Use Strategies**

Tasmania's three regional land use strategies were first declared in 2011 with each providing strategic direction for land use and development over a 25 year period. The policies contain strategies related to open space environments and are intended to be implemented in statutory provisions in a Planning Scheme, and utilised to guide decision making in relation to planning scheme amendments.

A number of amendments have been made to the Land Use Strategies since declaration and much discussion has arisen around the need for their review as a result of the Planning Reform process currently underway in Tasmania. In particular the State have indicated a comprehensive review all three strategies will be undertaken following the implementation of the future Tasmanian Planning Policies20. In terms of the relevance for open space environments and the relationship with the Open Space Strategy, the Minister is required to consult with relevant planning authorities under section 5A(4) of the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993. Council will have an opportunity to have a say on any concerns regarding changes to open space consideration as a part of this process.

The Devonport Local Government Area sits within the Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Strategy area, the document is *entitled Living on the Coast – The Cradle Coast Reginal Land Use Planning Framework*. Although not a statutory or strategic land use document per se, the DOSS should have a sound consistency with this regional land use strategy.

Whilst the Regional Strategy document itself is constructed as a broader policy framework, it is the content at Part C which details the actual strategy. In setting out what can generally be described as high level and broad strategic direction for land use planning in the region, the Regional Strategy identifies five general policy considerations:

1. Implementation
2. Wise Use of Resources
3. Support for Economic Activity
4. Places for People
5. Planned Provision for Infrastructure

Under Part 4.3.1 (g)(iii) and (vii) Places for People-liveable and sustainable communities, the strategy promotes the implementation of a structure plan and regulatory instruments for each centre which:

[20] Information Sheet RLUS-1-Reviewing and amending the Regional Land Use Strategies, Department of Justice, January 2019.

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"Embed opportunity for a mix of use and development within each centre sufficient to meet daily requirements for employment, education, health care, retail, personal care and social and recreation activity. Promote active and healthy communities through arrangements for activity centres, public spaces, and subdivision layout which facilitate walking and cycling."

Specifically, under Part 4.9 (a)-(e) Land Use Policies for Active Communities, the strategy promotes the implementation of open space strategies that align with the TOSPPF and the Cradle Coast Regional Open Space Strategy:

- Assist implementation of the Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework 2010 and the Cradle Coast Regional Open Space Strategy 2009 and other related sport and recreation plans and strategies endorsed by government agencies and planning authorities
- Facilitate equitably distribution of accessible built and natural settings in a variety of locations for formal and informal recreation, including for unstructured and structured physical and contemplative activity, sport, personal enjoyment, positive social interaction, spiritual well-being and the achievement of human potential
- Facilitate opportunity for recreation and open space land within all settlement, nature conservation and resource areas in accordance with population requirements and environmental capacity
- Require adequate open space and recreation capacity is available or planned to meet requirements from new development applying a process consistent with that outlined in the Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework 2010.

The strategies, policies and objectives of the Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Strategy are largely reflected in the Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework 2010 and the Cradle Coast Regional Open Space Strategy 2009. Between each of the documents there is a substantial amount of overlap.

The DOSS would provide the community with a quality experience of open space that is consistent with the Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework 2010, the Cradle Coast Regional Open Space Strategy 2009 and Council's Road Network Strategy (GHD May 2022).

### Cradle Coast Open Space Plan (CCOSP)

The Cradle Coast Open Space Plan forms the first part of the Cradle Coast Regional Open Space Plan, summarising the framework, key issues and strategic direction for nine local Councils in the West and Northwest of Tasmania.

The document begins by defining terms, noting that public open space has a variety of forms and functions. While some public open space may not be owned by Council and land of any tenure may contribute to local provision, the DOSS is specifically intended to support appropriate provision and use of open space in public ownership.

The strategy highlights four key metrics to assess demand and supply of open space:

- The type and size of settlement will influence what open space is required
- The size of the expected catchment will determine the size of the open space provided
- The function of the open space will influence what facilities are provided within it
- The landscape setting will influence both size and function.

Organised sport is one factor in open space, and should not be the focus of the strategy. While public sports grounds are needed, open space encompasses more than football pitches and bowling greens.

Key issues identified in the CCOSP are the major river systems and coastline which are specifically applicable to Devonport. While pockets of vegetation protection are important, there are no national parks located in the Municipality. Other more specific issues are identified in relation to Devonport:

- Strong planning controls should be in place to ensure public open space along the coast is not degraded especially where competition from other uses including road and rail corridors may erode form and function. A coastal path providing essentially unbroken connection from Port Sorrell to Stanley is suggested.
- Major rivers in the Devonport area are the Don and Mersey. Suitably wide corridors on both banks should protect natural values while facilitating appropriate use. Planning controls may extend to protecting vistas. Part of the eastern bank of the Forth River is in the Municipality as well.
- The Porcupine Hill Forest Reserve is the only existing area of regional significance, and are not the focus of the strategy.

The COVID pandemic and changing desirability of the area may force an update of this section of the strategy in future years. Notwithstanding, the strategy notes that a shift in residents' expectations of public space requires a new way of thinking. Devonport will require an increased investment in public open space to meet aspirational targets. Other demographic trends, like the ageing population in certain areas, should also be considered.

It is suggested focus on central civic areas can differentiate settlements and provide competing regional benefits to attract different types of investment and cultural pursuits. Collaboration with neighbouring LGAs may encourage a similar approach within the region.

Five Ps are the actions of this plan, in order from regional to local considerations:

- Policy

  Create regional inventory and prepare regional plans

  Support expertise including planning and management of public open space

  Campaign for new parks

- Provision

  Translate this plan and other relevant policies to local planning schemes

  Protect public corridors along waterways and the coast

  Protect important vegetation in other zones, consider rezoning

- Projects

  Appropriate land acquisition

  Construction of facilities for all ages and abilities

  Use road reserves to create new corridors and other open space purposes such as drainage

- Planning

  Regular inventory of supply and demand according to the standard matrix above

  Liaise with neighbouring councils when planning new spaces or retrofitting old spaces at subregional level and larger

- Process

  Harmonised approval process (this is overrun/completed with the new Tasmanian Planning Schemes being rolled out)

  Masterplanning requirements including surrounding area to highlight connectivity

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### Legislative provisions

The *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993* gives Council the authority to acquire public open space as a part of any subdivision proposal and to require cash in lieu of open space or to refuse a subdivision application because it should include or omit public open space.

Previous TASCAT (formerly RMPAT) decisions have placed more emphasis on the need for specific assessment of open space requirements before requiring its provision or the payment of cash in lieu. The Tribunal has also confirmed that it is appropriate for Council determine the issue of open space contributions prior to determining any application. This is most often done in the form of a policy for public open space acquisitions and contributions. A policy for this purpose does not need to be rigid or prescriptive but can give a rationale for decision making in respect to the requirements of the Act, and establish clear objectives and principles for the provision of suitably located, well designed open space. In addition, such rationale can guide the appropriate use of any cash in lieu contributions made. It is considered that such a policy is required as an immediate priority, in order to utilise the opportunity to secure funds for the ongoing provision and improvement of Public Open Space in the City.

It is also noted that these opportunities have also been considered in the recent Local Government Association of Tasmania *Infrastructure Contributions Discussion Paper* (April 2022). This paper is an overall examination of infrastructure contributions schemes in Australian States and considers open space provision. Infrastructure provision in the form of public open spaces is noted as the most common policy and strategy approach for the example Councils. LGAT notes that the strength of this lies in the authority and legislative power to do so under the *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993*.[21]

### Devonport Road Network Strategy 2021

The Devonport Road Network Strategy (RNS) outlines the means for a road network suitable for Devonport and its road users. The RNS provides a long-term vision for the transport network to meet the needs of the community, business, tourism and industry through two-to-ten year goals.

Council is currently updating the 2016 Devonport's Road Network Strategy, in which there is a focus on greater connectivity and safety for pedestrians and bike riders. There is value in integrating the RNS with the DOSS, as safe and easy connections are critical to allowing community to access and use of POS; therefore, the DOSS identifies key areas where access to POS can be improved.

The key issue related to POS and the RNS is that within the Devonport CBD there is conflict for pedestrians and cyclists when connecting to peripheral POS areas. Outside of the CBD are opportunities for the consideration of increased activity and movement for transport modes such as cycling, and for pedestrian access or "walkability". Following the finalisation of the actions of the RNS the Council would be able to further consider the specific ways spaces can:

- Create increased walkability such as active travel to and from Education facilities, light retail and within the CBD using a 400 metre catchment around the key activity areas.
- Create active transport journeys between places of activity.
- Create a cycle or walkway that incorporates opportunities to stop and rest and rehydrate or talk to a neighbour.
- Incorporate features that recognise elements of Country and its Traditional Custodians, the Tommeginne people.

[21] Infrastructure Contributions Discussion Paper, April 2022, Local Government Association Tasmania.

- Incorporate interpretations of Devonport's European cultural heritage; its rich industrial and maritime history.
- Incorporate sculptures or art pieces by local artists or schools.
- Create safe areas for ice cream trucks or food vans to stop.

### Devonport Strategic Plan 2009-2030

The Devonport Strategic Plan 2009-2030 outlines how Council plans to achieve its vision for Devonport to become a thriving and welcoming regional City living lightly by river and sea. The DOSS assists in achieving the Goals, Outcomes and Strategies of the Strategic Plan.

The DOSS builds on the Strategic Plan, endorsed by Council in 2019 and aligns with other plans and policies.

*Table 7* ***Strategies from the Strategic Plan supported by the DOSS***

| Number | Outcome | How DOSS Supports the Strategy |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy 1.2.1 | Support the conservation and maintenance of biodiversity including coastal landscapes and preservation of areas of remnant vegetation | Conservation and biodiversity recommendations are included via university research |
| Strategy 2.1.1 | Apply and review the Planning Scheme as required, to ensure it delivers local community character and appropriate land use | It is recommended a Council Acquisitions and Contributions Policy be drafted to guide POS decisions |
| Strategy 2.3.5 | Provide and maintain sustainable parks, gardens and open spaces to appropriate standards | Assists Councill's planning, property management and infrastructure areas in deciding the appropriate form and location of open space for the future |
| Strategy 3.2.1 | Support tourism through the provision of well designed and managed infrastructure and facilities | The Council and State Government's commitment to the LIVING CITY vision is enhanced by the DOSS to create a city where people want to work, live and visit |
| Strategy 3.2.4 | Promote our natural environment and assets to underpin tourism opportunities | Recommendations for POS provision and access supports improved tourism by emphasising valued natural icons |
| Strategy 4.1.1 | Provide and manage accessible sport, recreation and leisure facilities and programs | The DOSS compliments the Council Sport and Recreation Strategy |
| Strategy 4.1.3 | Promote passive recreational usage including walking, bike paths, trails, parks and playspaces | The DOSS assesses POS quality and provision and recommends locations for improved facilities and/or access |

***Goal 2 specific strategies relevant to DOSS***

| Outcomes and Strategies | Alignment of Recommendations and Implementation Measures |
|---|---|
| 2.1 Council Planning Scheme facilitates appropriate property use& development<br><br>2.1.1 Apply and review the Planning Scheme as required, to ensure it delivers local community character and appropriate land use<br><br>2.1.2 Provide consistent and responsive development assessment and compliance processes<br><br>2.1.3 Work in partnership with neighbouring Councils, State Government and other key stakeholders on regional planning and development issues | Council's Statutory and Strategic land use planning documents have been reviewed.<br><br>Recent Planning decisions for the Devonport Showgrounds and Stony Rise area have been considered.<br><br>The DOSS will assist Councill's planning, property management and infrastructure areas in deciding the appropriate form and location of open space for the future.<br><br>It is recommended a Council Policy be drafted to guide the provision of open space in the City.<br><br>The Open Space Strategy has considered the Cradle Coast Regional land use strategy and the NW regional open space network strategy and so Council is placed to partner with neighbouring Councils, the State and regional initiatives. |
| 2.2 The Devonport brand supports our marketing and promotion<br><br>2.2.1 Maintain a local brand that supports our competitive advantages<br><br>2.2.2 Develop an integrated approach to local branding in partnership with business and community groups. | The Engagement Approach, Analysis against the Loveable Cities Framework and Analysis and Recommendations for the spaces themselves supports the development of branding for the City as a place to live, invest, work, shop and visit.<br><br>Local and unique opportunities and community identity and experiences are a competitive advantage to demonstrate the importance of social value and benefit in the investment in placemaking and infrastructure provision. |
| 2.3 Infrastructure priorities support well planned, managed and appropriately funded development within our unique City<br><br>2.3.1 Develop and maintain long term Strategic Asset Management Plans<br><br>2.3.2 Provide and maintain roads, bridges, paths and car parks to appropriate standards<br><br>2.3.3 Provide and maintain stormwater infrastructure to appropriate standards<br><br>2.3.4 Provide and maintain Council buildings, facilities and amenities to appropriate standards<br><br>2.3.5 Provide and maintain sustainable parks, gardens and open spaces to appropriate standards | Council has an obligation under the Local Government Act to Provide and Maintain a range of infrastructure. The Open Space Strategy and the development of a Council Acquisitions and Contributions Policy will ensure the opportunities to do so for open space areas under the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1993 are maximised and based in sound planning principles. |

| Outcomes and Strategies | Alignment of Recommendations and Implementation Measures |
|---|---|
| 2.4 Promote the development of the CBD in a manner which achieves the LIVING CITY Principles Plan.<br><br>2.4.1 Implement initiatives from the LIVING CITY Master Plan.<br><br>2.4.2 Lobby and attract Government support to assist with the implementation of the LIVING CITY Master Plan.<br><br>2.4.3 Implement initiatives to encourage private investment aligned with the outcomes of the LIVING CITY Master Plan. | The Council and State Government's commitment to the LIVING CITY vision is enhanced by an approach where the planning for public spaces and infrastructure actively creates parts of the City where the community want to work, live and visit.<br><br>One of the key components of creating the LIVING CITY Master Plan was for it to be a reflection of what the community wanted (p 4 LIVING CITY Master Plan). The Open Space Strategy focusses on the community's aspirations for public spaces and provides a pragmatic fit for purpose assessment and locality analysis to allow the Council to implement it's vision.<br><br>The announcement of the Premier of Tasmania's commitment to a well-being framework presents opportunities to put this Strategy and key recommendations forward for funding and other assistance.<br><br>The land development process provides a statutory opportunity to use private development investment funds for the provision or improvement of public spaces. |

DRAFT

## A-3 DOSS POS Analysis Mapping

## A-4 Engagement Summary Report

DRAFT

# Open Space Strategy

## Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Devonport City Council

31 May 2022

→ **The Power of Commitment**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| **Document title** | | Open Space Strategy \| Stakeholder Engagement Summary | | | | | |
| **Project number** | | 12565457 | | | | | |
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| [Status code] | | | | | | | |

**GHD Pty Ltd | ABN 39 008 488 373**

2 Salamanca Square,

Hobart, TAS 7000, Australia

**T** 03 6210 0600| **F** +61 3 8732 7046 | **E** hbamail@ghd.com | **ghd.com**

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# 1. About the project

This project has been undertaken to develop an Open Space Strategy to protect and enhance public infrastructure and other assets for the benefit of the Devonport community. The Strategy will identify underutilised open space, improve the integration of open space development assessment processes to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for the City of Devonport.

The development of the Strategy will assist Council in making decisions on public open space (POS) contributions at the time of subdivision, identify opportunities to acquire or protect important open space connections, preserve natural values and improve the general amenity of council owned open space.

The Strategy will establish distribution of spaces and their accessibility to set and meet expectations of "levels of service" from the community and will inform asset management and maintenance programs through the development of an action plan spanning the Strategy's life. The Strategy will provide exponential social and economic benefit to the region through early planning to ensure best use of capital expenditure and cash contributions, alignment of POS provisions with community expectations and an action plan for continuous improvement to the region's open spaces.

# 2. Stakeholder engagement summary

## 2.1 Consultation objectives

The key objective of the stakeholder engagement for this project was to facilitate meaningful community engagement by creating inclusive channels and forums to foster and encourage active input, elicit feedback and capture valuable local knowledge to enable community ownership of project outcomes.

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- clearly explain project objectives
- receive feedback from as many members of the community as possible to inform the development of the Open Space Strategy
- foster Council's trusting and positive relationships with the community.

## 2.2 Summary of consultation

A Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan was developed identifying key stakeholders, outlining key messages, activities, project timing and feedback opportunities to support the project objectives. Stakeholder engagement content was prepared to provide information around why an open space audit was being undertaken and how the audit will enable the council to draft an open space strategy. Content was also prepared to inform the community about how they could provide feedback about their perceptions and usage of open space.

GHD's 'Loveable' framework was used to develop a survey which invited the community to share what they loved about Devonport's open spaces. Questions aimed to collect community perception and opinion on amenity, facilities, usage, users, quality and accessibility, and were framed to collect both quantitative and qualitative responses. Surveys were released for 36 open space locations across the council area with QR code signage installed in each location allowing community to access the survey online via a smart device.

Four community pop-up sessions at Highfield Park, Pioneer Park, Mersey Bluff and Miandetta Park were carried out to support the broader roll out of the online surveys. Children and adults were invited to design their dream open space through an interactive drawing activity.



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The aim of the pop-up sessions was to elicit active community input to supplement survey responses, capture and allow a broader demographic, including children to respond, and provide council staff and Councillors with a face-to-face opportunity to engage with their community, to help build trusting and positive relationships.

During the pop-up sessions council staff were able to provide information about the development of the Open Space Strategy, answer questions, listen to community feedback and gain deeper insight into what the community value, how they currently use their open spaces and their future aspirations. The pop-up sessions provided important anecdotal data about a variety of spaces and community users as well identifying future engagement opportunities to involve the community and better engage schools. The pop-up sessions were important in demonstrating Council's genuine commitment to listening to and involving the community as part of infrastructure development, and establishing sound relationships for future projects.

A total of 487 survey responses were collected as well as numerous drawings by children who participated in the pop-up sessions. One of the drawings, by Matilda is featured on the cover of this report.

Surveys and pop-up sessions were promoted via the media, social media platforms, council website and public signage. The Mayor featured in The Advocate and on SeaFM speaking about the project and encouraging community participation.

The resulting community feedback was collated and analysed providing GHD planners and Council with a rich source of data to inform and contribute to the development of the Open Space Strategy.

A summary of the stakeholder engagement activities that were undertaken can be seen in the table following.

## 2.3 Stakeholder engagement activities

| Activity | Description |
|---|---|
| Survey | Feedback survey- questions on which spaces respondents love and use regularly, what could be improved, what they would like to see in other places, etc. |
| Public display | Display showing aerial map of open spaces with pop out images of the spaces to trigger memory, emotion. Survey available in hard copy at display. |
| Project letter | Letter to ratepayers/residents introducing the project and providing details of consultation opportunities. |
| Pop Up Sessions | Four sessions inviting the community to design their dream open space, demonstrated through drawing. Surveys were available in hard copy. Combined with two community events (Pioneer Park and Highfield Park). Opportunity for Council to meet the community, discuss the project and listen to feedback. |
| Signage on corflute | Signage at open space locations with QR code linked to survey. QR code - location specific. |
| Newsletter | Council newsletter, school newsletters with project information including pop-up sessions and survey links. |
| Facebook | Introduction to project and links to survey |
| Website | Introduction to project and links to survey |
| Email | participate@ghd.com email address used to capture feedback |
| Phone number | 6210 0662 phone number used to capture feedback |



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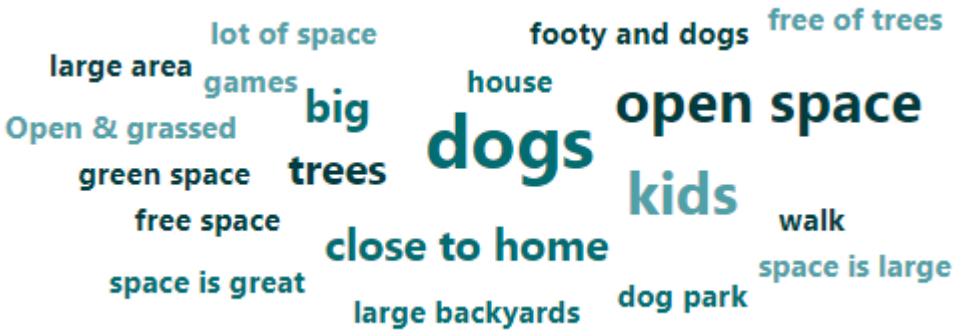
## 2.4 What do the community love about their open spaces?

*"A dog park, as at least half the house holds around here have dogs, with it growing with each new house built" "*

*"How big and quiet it is"*

*"Open grassy area near houses"*




## 2.5 What would people like to see more of in their open spaces?

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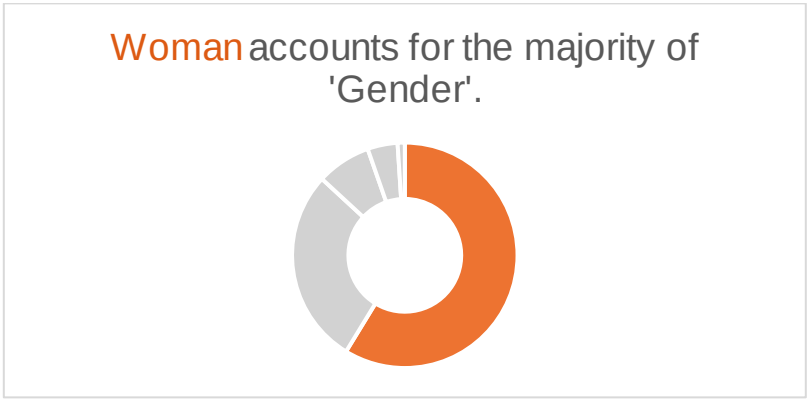
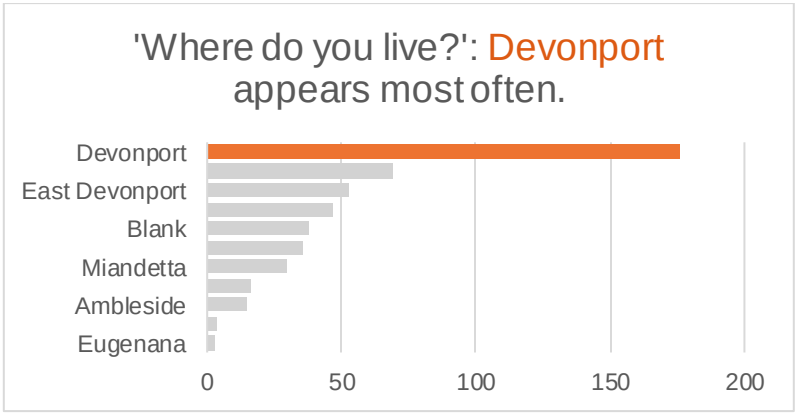
# 2.6 Profile of respondents

***Gender***

| Gender | Age | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 31-45 years | 46-65 years | 19-30 years | 65+ years | 0-18 years | Blank | Grand Total |
| Woman | 109 | 134 | | 43 | | | 286 |
| Man | 28 | | 69 | | 40 | | 137 |
| Blank | | | | | | 38 | 38 |
| Prefer not to say | 21 | | | | | | 21 |
| Non-binary | 5 | | | | | | 5 |




***Suburb***



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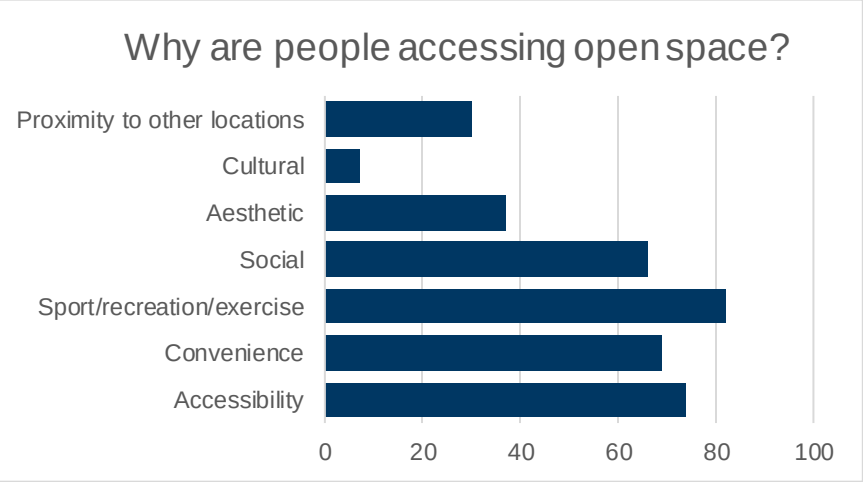
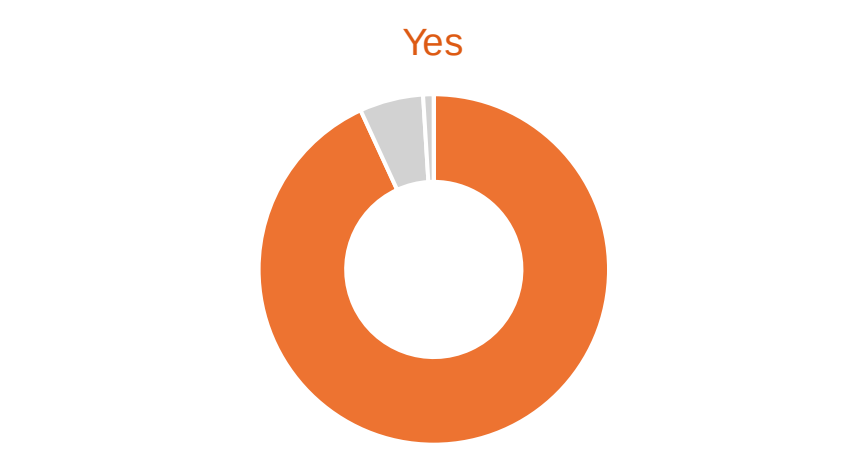
## 2.7 Usage of open space

***Why are people accessing open space?***




***How do you make your way to open spaces?***

***Is it easy for you to access open spaces?***



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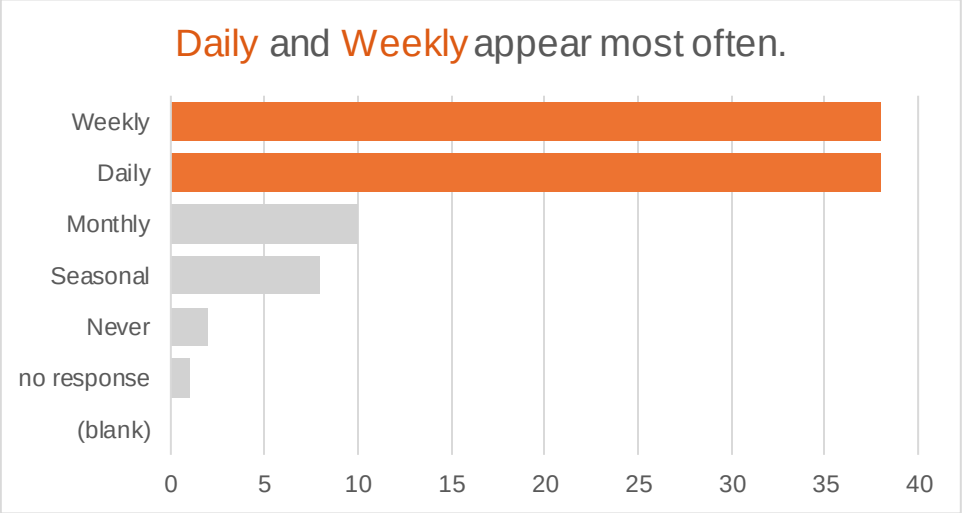
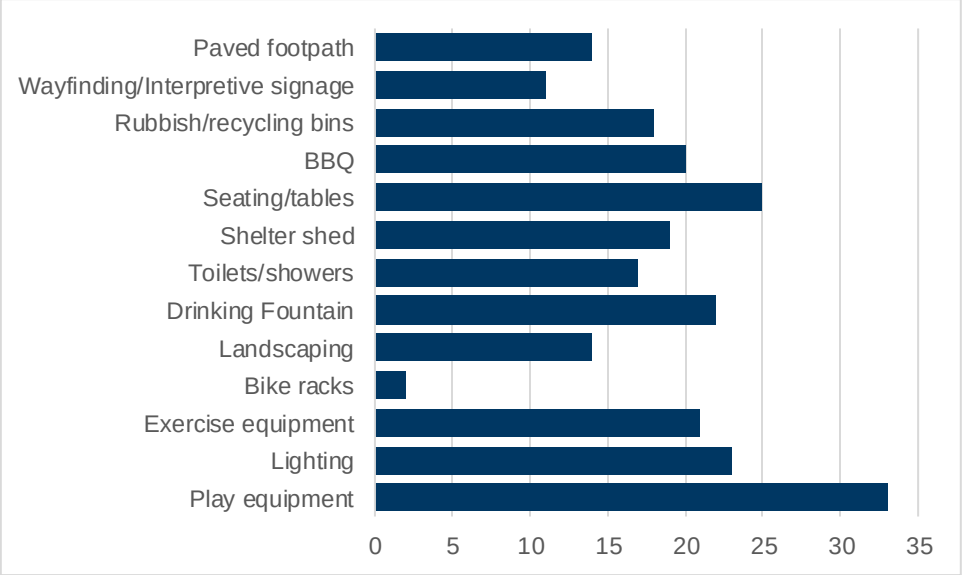
***How often do you use open spaces?***




## 2.8 Desired amenity

***What would you like added to this space?***



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# 2.9 Surveys and pop-up session locations

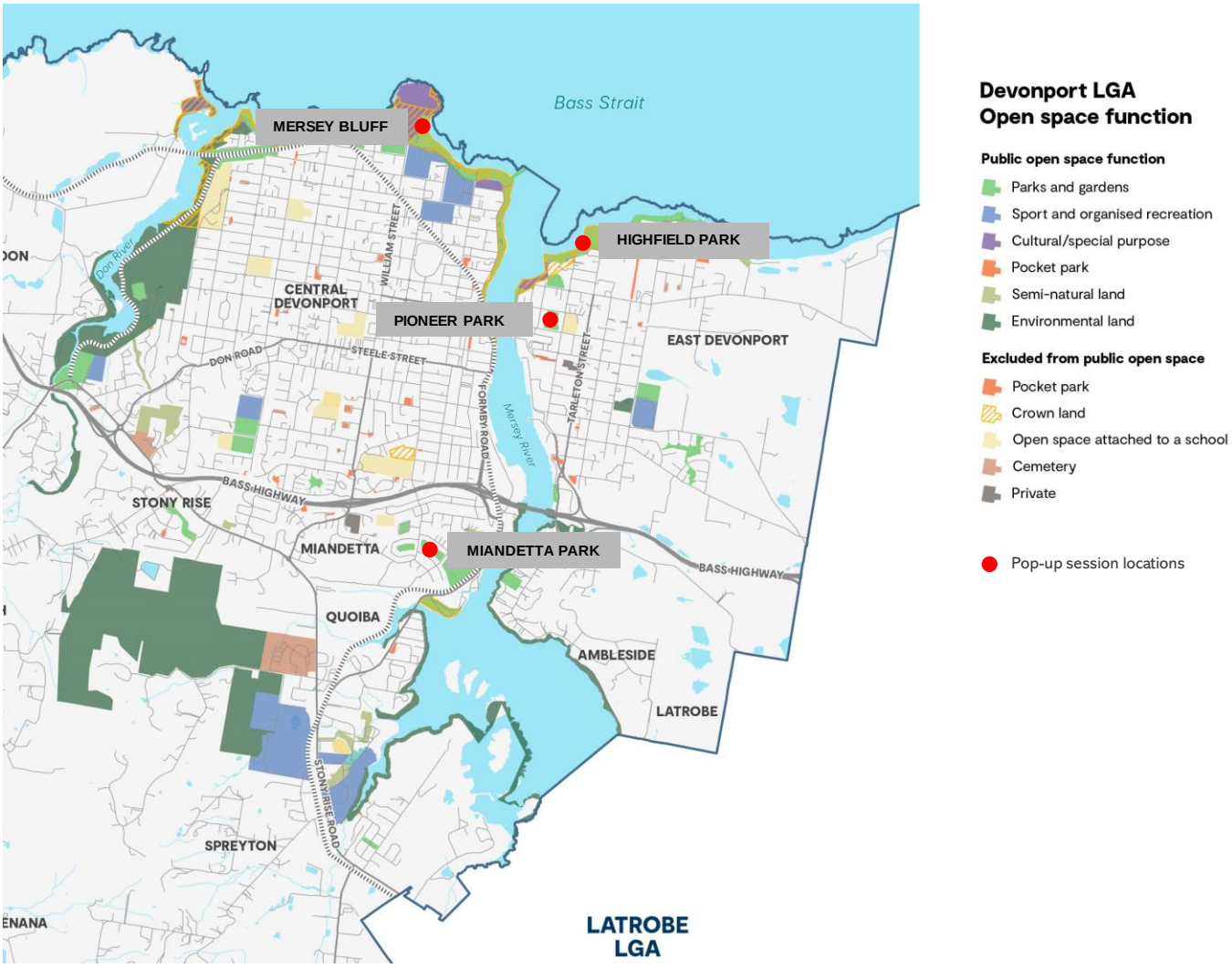


*Figure 1 Map showing open space function and pop-up session locations*

***Surveys were collected from the following locations:***

| Location | No. of responses | Location | No. of responses | Location | No. of responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mersey Bluff | 34 | Victoria Parade | 36 | Pioneer Park | 21 |
| Woodrising Avenue | 34 | MacArthur Drive | 6 | Leary Avenue | 40 |
| Hiller Flora Reserve | 6 | Turners Reserve | 2 | East Devonport Foreshore | 28 |
| Kiah Place | 0 | Mary Binks Wetland | 2 | Rannoch Estate | 4 |
| Reg Hope | 2 | St Georges Park | 3 | River Road | 7 |
| BSMC | 0 | Aikenhead Point | 7 | Back Beach | 11 |
| Coles Beach | 3 | College Court | 3 | Dahlia Court | 3 |



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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fenton Way | 1 | Madden Street | 4 | Victoria Street | 1 |
| Market Square | 4 | Rooke Street Mall | 1 | Waterfront Park | 3 |
| Kelcey Tier Greenbelt | 9 | Clayton Drive | 5 | Highfield Park | 8 |
| Don Hall/Dell Luck Reserve | 7 | Don Reserve | 39 | Horsehead Creek | 4 |
| Miandetta Park | 20 | Nyora Court | 5 | Council Website | 184 |

## 2.10 Community feedback

Community sentiment was generally very positive about Devonport's open spaces. The responses demonstrated they are an active and invested community who are committed to contributing to the ongoing improvement and future of their city and region.

Feedback identified community values, current usage, including types of activities undertaken, frequency of use and the community's immediate and long-term aspirations for their open spaces. Data shows that users and usage varies depending on location and facilities currently offered. This indicates that Devonport has a variety of place 'personalities' created by a unique combination of social and physical characteristics.

The survey focussed on initiating a conversation to draw out information about the community's most treasured aspects of their open spaces asking, 'What do you love most about Devonport's open spaces?", followed by questions aimed at ascertaining the level of service being currently provided by existing amenities and eliciting comment on what improvements the community desired.

*Figure 2 Word cloud showing responses to "What do you love most about Devonport's open spaces?"*

Broadly speaking, walking, including dog walking, sport, exercise and socialising with family and friends are the main purposes for which people are using open space currently with convenience, accessibility and aesthetic characteristics influencing usage. Most people make their way to open space via car/motorbike or walking/running. Cycling/scooting/skating are the next most common forms of travel to and from these spaces.

People are overwhelming happy with the accessibility of open space, however dependence upon cars to provide access was also noted as a concern. People are accessing the majority of spaces on a weekly or daily basis, year-round.

In relation to improvements, people would most like more play equipment and rubbish/recycling bins. Landscaping with additional plantings and water features were also popular. Increased amenities such as barbecues, shelter sheds, seating, toilets/showers and exercise equipment were also favoured. Facilities for children were of particular importance with all spaces indicating that providing accessible spaces for equitable play, balancing the needs of boys and girls, exercise and socialising for families and young people is very important.



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# 3. Next steps

An Open Place Strategy will be prepared and presented to council to guide future open space planning.



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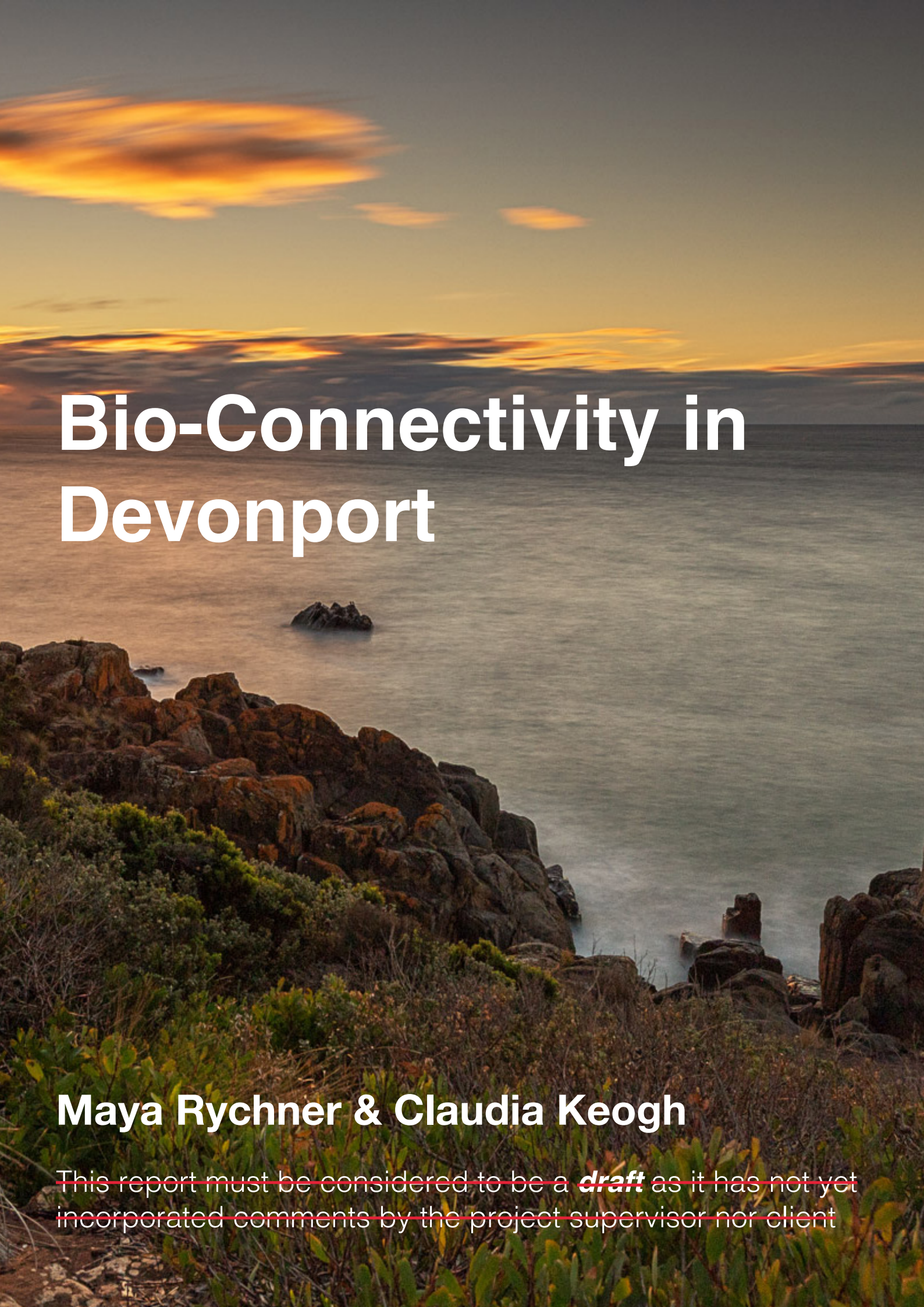
## A-5 RMIT Bio-Connectivity Study



# Bio-Connectivity in Devonport

Maya Rychner & Claudia Keogh

~~This report must be considered to be a ***draft*** as it has not yet incorporated comments by the project supervisor nor client~~

# Executive Summary

This report has been produced to support GHD in the preparation of an open space strategy for the City of Devonport by addressing the following research question: “How can Devonport’s open space network be enhanced to improve bio connectivity and create a more lovable city?”. The City of Devonport offers habitat to numerous species of conservation significance, yet urbanisation can impede on these species’ movement through the urban matrix, leading to population decline, reduced biodiversity and local extinction. In order to ensure these species survive now and into the future, it is crucial to establish connectivity between habitat-providing urban green spaces.

These issues were addressed through the following objectives:

- Determine the key attributes of biodiverse sensitive urban design in the context of public open spaces in the City of Devonport
- Analyse the results of stakeholder engagement survey to understand how the community of Devonport views their public open spaces and biodiversity to ensure the strategy aligns with the values of the community
- Identify areas of public open space that are suitable habitat for key fauna species, and areas that have potential to be enhanced to allow for improved connectivity between habitats in public open spaces.

We utilised a mixed methodology consisting of an academic and grey literature review, to: determine the best practice of POS planning; review open space strategies produced for other local governments; and seek innovative redesigns of open spaces. Thematic analysis of the stakeholder engagement survey and geospatial analysis of the study area was conducted. This report found that the City of Devonport lacks open space throughout the city centre and that the key remnant habitat is found along the coast and surrounding the hydrological features. Many of the city’s existing public open spaces do not yet provide quality habitat for biodiversity but could be enhanced to act as stepping stones, hence linking habitat features.

To address the issues identified, the following recommendations are made:

1. Maintain and protect existing natural assets - old growth trees, waterbodies, existing natural and remnant vegetation classes
2. Enhance existing public open spaces by introducing habitat using BSUD principles- increase understory vegetation, prioritise native vegetation choices, implement GI like nesting boxes/rain gardens, etc.,
3. Increase connectivity between public open spaces using green infrastructure - increase the provision of street trees and mitigate road barriers with understorey vegetation

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## Abbreviations

OSS - Open Space Strategy (reference to GHD's Open Space Strategy for the city of Devonport)

POS - public open space

GI - green infrastructure

BSUD - biodiversity sensitive urban design

# 1.0 Introduction

The Devonport City Council commissioned engineering and planning consultant company GHD to prepare an Open Space Strategy for the city. The purpose of the Open Space Strategy is to identify underutilised open space and deliver more recreation spaces. GHD aim to analyse the distribution of current public open spaces in the city, improve the connectivity of open space and provide more recreational areas for the community. The Open Space Strategy will provide strategic direction for the management, provision and future planning of public open space in Devonport over the next 10 years. Whilst GHD have focused on the human and recreational needs for open space, they requested our team to investigate opportunities to enhance bio-connectivity in the city through public open space planning. There are many significant species present within Devonport, and integrating ecological needs into the OSS would further ensure these species will survive now and into the future.

# 2.0 Context

## 2.1 The City of Devonport

Devonport is located on the northern coast of Tasmania, about 100km north-west of Launceston CBD. The city had an urban population of 23,046 at the 2016 census, and was estimated to have a population of around 25,000 in 2021 (Id Community 2021). Devonport is situated at the mouth of the Mersey river, where the Spirit of Tasmania docks from Melbourne (Discover Tasmania 2022). Tourism is an important industry in the city as its location provides a thoroughfare to greater Tasmania for travellers taking the ferry journey across the Bass Strait (Discover Tasmania 2022). The Bass Highway runs through the city and provides a major transportation link.

The city encompasses a total land area of 116 square kilometres (Id Community 2021). Devonport features both urban and rural land uses, with a vegetable crop and dairy farming industry dominating rural land uses (Id Comunity 2021). Urban land uses include a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial areas.

The Devonport City Council has an aspirational population goal of 30,000 by 2030, and have made it significantly easier to rezone land for residential housing through the adoption of a regional growth plan (Bingham 2022). Whilst this may provide benefits to the local economy, the reduction of red tape around land rezoning may result in further loss of remnant vegetation and biodiversity habitat through development, subdivision and conversion to residential lots. With the growth of Devonport further encroaching into biodiversity habitat, it is crucial to ensure enough habitat connectivity is provided throughout the urban matrix.

Figure 1: Map of Tasmania

2.2. Loveable Cities

Throughout most of human history, societies have been most concerned with survival. As humanity continues to develop, the rise of agriculture and increased productive ability has meant that most humans have the means to be fed and sheltered. Now that these basic needs of liveability have been met, planners and designers are tasked with the duty of creating a city that can transcend liveability, to achieve genuine affinity to a place one can truly love. It is widely understood that green and blue spaces and areas which host biodiversity have positive impacts on human wellbeing, particularly in urbanised areas offering more sustainable human development (Naeem et al. 2016).

A lovable city can be envisaged as one that provides for its residents through the following themes; health and wellbeing, social and cultural, amenity and infrastructure, local empowerment and commerce (GHD 2020). In a recent contribution to the academic literature, Kourtit et al. (2022) has developed a framework for the concept of city love, proposing that the intangible, emotional & social elements create attachment and pride in an individual, while the tangible, physical & functional elements create satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 1 presents how biodiverse city offers both tangible and intangible elements in alignment with the lovable cities framework themes.

Figure 2: GHD's 'Loveable City' Framework

Table 1: Loveable City Themes and Biodiversity in Cities

| Loveable City Themes | Tangible offerings of a biodiverse city | Intangible offerings of a biodiverse city |
|---|---|---|
| Health and wellbeing | Ecosystem services<br>Climate security | Wellbeing<br>Active lifestyle |
| Social and cultural | Provision of activities | Belonging and identity<br>Connection to Country<br>Cultural expression |
| Amenity and infrastructure | Built and natural environment<br>Supportive infrastructure<br>Diversity of place | Aesthetic value |
| Local empowerment | Diversity of jobs<br>Participation in nature | Sense of ownership |

# 3.0 Academic Literature Review

There is an extensive swathe of peer-reviewed literature on best practice in public open space planning for biodiversity. Using the RMIT library database, we began with the search string "biodiversity open space planning" which returned 37,000 articles. A more specific search string using key words "biodiversity", "connectivity" and "urban" returned 26,000 results, however, when adding in the phrase "open space planning" to the former search string, RMIT library produced 142 peer-reviewed articles. We sifted through these articles to form the basis of our academic literature review.

Almost all articles highlighted the importance of habitat connectivity to ensure species can move, migrate, forage and reproduce in the urban matrix (Pirnat & Hladnik 2019; Ignatieva, Stewart & Meurk 2011; Lepczyk et al. 2017; Garrad et al. 2017). It is critical to establish habitat corridors between green infrastructure hubs and green open space, to increase functional and structural connectivity (Gong & Hu 2022). The stability of the species has a direct correlation with the complexity of the network structure. This is because urban areas contain large amounts of unsuitable land cover which is unconducive with habitat, hence impeding species movement and sometimes leading to local extinctions (Almenar et al. 2019). The academic literature identifies two main ways to increase connectivity for biodiversity: through structural elements (e.g. green corridors, street trees, waterways, stepping stones) or through mitigation efforts to reduce barriers (e.g. wildlife underpasses, overpasses) (LaPoint et al. 2015). However, the effectiveness of these vary depending on the species/taxonomic group, as each species has different habitat requirements and movement capacities (Kirk et al. 2018). The literature also stresses the importance in recognising the difference between functional and structural connectivity - where structural connectivity only accounts for the available habitat, and functional connectivity considers different species' ability to move across a landscape (Kirk et al. 2018; Gong & Hu 2022).

The academic literature also conveyed the importance of the quality of green space and their vegetation attributes. Through their extensive Melbourne study, Threlfall et al. (2017) identify three key vegetation attributes that impact on biodiversity: the density of large native trees, volume of understorey vegetation and percentage of native vegetation. Overwhelmingly, their research showed that the volume of understorey vegetation is the most influential factor in increasing occupancy of various species, with native vegetation and large trees also displaying positive impacts (Threlfall et al. 2017). Many other peer-reviewed articles support the contention that the promotion of complex understorey, native vegetation and large trees in urban green space management will have significant positive impacts on biodiversity (Threlfall et al. 2017; Prevdello, Almeida-Gomes & Lindenmayer 2017).

Additionally, the literature review identified key challenges to ecological connectivity within urban areas. Differences in the ownership and management of urban green spaces can present a challenge for biodiversity-focused planning (Aronson et al. 2017). Many current land management practices are barriers to ecological conservation and can threaten biodiversity in urban areas. These include the presence of turf grass lawn, tree and shrub pruning, pesticide/herbicide use, and introduction of non-native flora and fauna species (Aronson et al. 2017). In addition to management practices, man made structures such as roads persist as a challenge to connectivity, with the literature identifying road mortality as a significant threat to species in Tasmania (Englefield et al. 2019; Jones 2000; Magnas et al. 2004).

In a recent addition to the academic literature, Kirk et al. (2021) summarises how structural elements and mitigation efforts can be addressed by proposing fundamental biodiversity sensitive urban design requirements, as evidenced in their extensive case study on the application of biodiversity sensitive urban design. They highlight the protection of existing assets, enhancing existing infrastructure and facilitating linkage across barriers in the landscape as key to a biodiverse urban space. Ultimately, our academic literature review provided useful information on the key opportunities and challenges to ecological open space planning.

# 3.1 Grey Literature Review: Other Council's Open Space Strategies

| Council Open Space Strategy | Key Principles | Biodiversity Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Sorell TAS 2020 | • To facilitate regional growth<br>• Responsible stewardship and a sustainable organisation<br>• To ensure a liveable and inclusive community<br>• Increased community confidence in Council | • Appointment of a part-time community engagement/ NRM officer.<br>• Formalise underdeveloped POS to reduce impacts on the coastal environment<br>• Protection of greenbelt land to create areas of refuge for vulnerable endemic flora and fauna |
| Launceston TAS 2015 | • To create spaces fit for purpose<br>• Equity in distribution and range of spaces<br>• Diversity of spaces<br>• Accessibility of spaces<br>• Quality of design<br>• Affordable provisions and cost efficacy | • Protecting existing trees and new vegetation additions<br>• Identifying areas with limited value and improve them with alternate uses<br>• Suggesting community horticulture which could act as biodiversity links<br>• Suggests 2 locations for potential acquisition for the purpose of conserving bushland to encourage biodiversity |
| Kingborough TAS 2019 | • Establish an integrated and consistent open space policy and planning framework<br>• Capacity to manage an open space system that contributes to environmental sustainability.<br>• Social inclusion, community connectivity and community health and wellbeing. | • Protect and enhance the values of the natural environment through strategic and coordinated natural resource management<br>• Contribute directly and indirectly to climate change mitigation and adaptation; - facilitate active transport (i.e. non-motorised), minimise emissions, and lower the community's carbon footprint<br>• Support in a co-operative way, various land managers and the community working in partnership to achieve environmentally sustainable outcomes |
| Darebin VIC 2020 | • Meeting community open space needs<br>• Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity<br>• Creating a Green Streets Network | • Increase appreciation for biodiversity<br>• Protect local species<br>• Engage the community as partners in biodiversity protection<br>• Make indigenous bushland character the default choice<br>• Develop a network of green streets in Darebin |
| Surf Coast Shire VIC 2016 | • Understand community preferences and desires<br>• Ensure council's public open spaces are well managed, well maintained and accessible & optimal open space outcomes are achieved in new land developments Protect green belts for landscape connectivity, biodiversity and amenity | • Integrating environmental protection values into more recreation areas<br>• Seeking suitable unused road reserves to be included in the open space network to enhance connectivity<br>• Protection of natural assets to increase outdoor recreation and ecotourism opportunities |
| Metropolitan Melbourne VIC 2021 | • Improved community health and wellbeing<br>• Healthier biodiversity<br>• Enhanced climate change resilience<br>• Maximised economic and social benefits | • Creation of 29 new pocket parks<br>• Transformation of stormwater drains and creeks into accessible waterways and open space<br>• "Greening the Pipeline" project which aims to redevelop disused infrastructure to connect existing reserves<br>• Progressive acquisition of land to develop a chain of parks linking POS |

# 3.2 Case Studies: Innovative POS Creation in Urban Areas

## The High Line - New York

The High Line is a linear park in New York that was created from a disused rail line. The design of the green space incorporates biodiversity needs into its structure. The High Line is planted with endemic, drought-tolerant vegetation species that provide important resources for biodiversity (Friends of the High Line 2022). It is home to butterfly, moth, bird and more than 400 wild bee species (Friends of the High Line 2022).

Image: the High Line NY; Source: thehighline.org

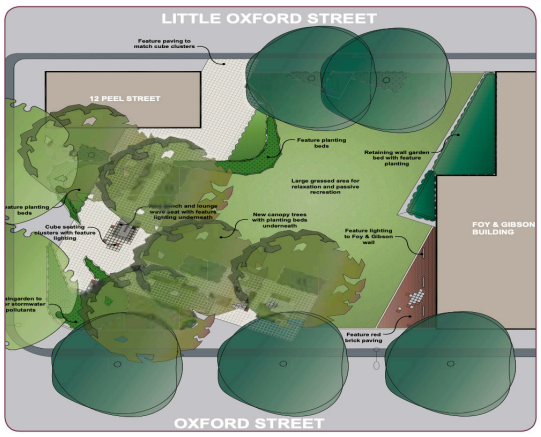


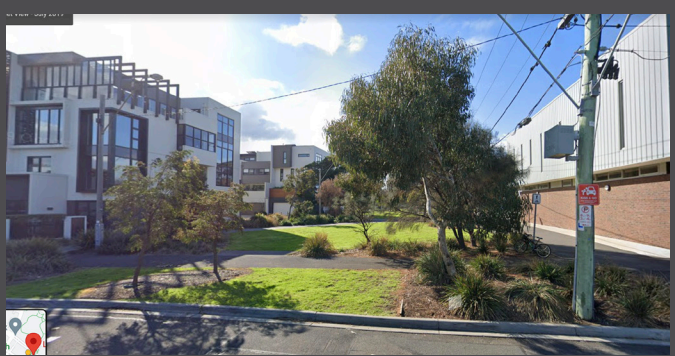

Image: Peel Street Park Concept Plan
Source: Yarra Council 2010

## Peel St. Park - Collingwood

Formerly a public car park with 28 car spaces, Peel Street Park is an example of innovative urban green space creation in a highly urbanised area (DTPLI 2013). The park integrates both recreational and ecological functions, and incorporates seating, a rain garden to capture and treat rainwater, garden beds, drought tolerant native species and canopy trees (DTPLI 2013). The process of planning and delivering the park took the Council around 2 years.

## Lemnos Square (Foote Street Reserve) - Albert Park

In 2009, a section of Foote street in Albert Park was closed to create a new urban green space (DTPLI 2013). The square connects with nearby Gasworks park, hence simultaneously providing new POS and increasing green space connectivity. The creation of Lemnos square required extensive collaboration between the City of Port Phillip council and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and also community consultation. This case study showcases an innovative solution to the lack of green spaces in highly urbanised areas, where delivering new POS is often met with high land costs, administrative difficulties and fragmented land ownership (DTLPI 2013).



Images: Lemnos Square before (2009) and after (2019)
Source: google maps street view

# 4.0 Methodology

## 4.1 Feedback Survey

GHD conducted a survey as part of their stakeholder engagement plan, preceding their creation of Devonport's public open space strategy over the period of 1/03/22 to 31/03/22. This survey received a total number of 487 responses in person and online, addressing 32 public open spaces. Rich, qualitative data was provided which was then analysed by thematic frequency to quantify the results.

## 4.2 GIS Mapping

A predominant part of our methodology consisted of GIS mapping, which we conducted using Tasmanian Government geospatial data from ListMap. Considering that this project is focused on the distribution of POS and biodiversity habitat, GIS mapping provided the most useful tool to collate, analyse and display spatial information. GIS is an ideal platform for representing information and subsequently informing effective decision making (Gimpel et al. 2018). We used the application QGIS (version 3.10) to undertake our mapping.

## 4.3 Habitat Analysis

The first stage of habitat analysis involved determining the species with their range in the City of Devonport. We decided to limit our scope to species of conservation significance. Consultation of the Biodiversity Values Database identified species of conservation value in the locality, supported by Species Profile and Threats Database to further identify habitat needs and concerns for the species of interest in accordance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Geospatial information including Tasmanian Planning Scheme zones, local government area reserves, local vegetation classes, and hydrological features was derived from ListData.

Image: the Spirit of Tasmania docked at Devonport
Source: wikipedia.org

# 5.0 Results

## 5.1 Survey Feedback

The results of the Community Engagement survey conducted by GHD as part of the stakeholder engagement process reflected that the community of Devonport value biodiversity in their public open spaces, providing quantitative and qualitative data. We analysed the data provided for the questions “what do you love most about this space?” and “what would you like to see more of in Devonport’s open spaces?”.

Figure 3 presents the proportion of respondents who said they love the biodiversity supporting elements of their public open spaces and figure 4 shows the proportion of respondents that would like to see biodiversity supporting changes.

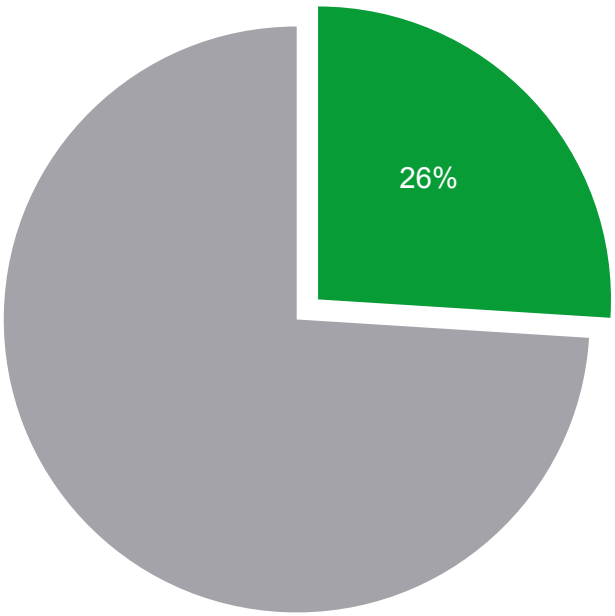



Figure 3: Proportion of Devonport residents who love biodiversity elements of their POS

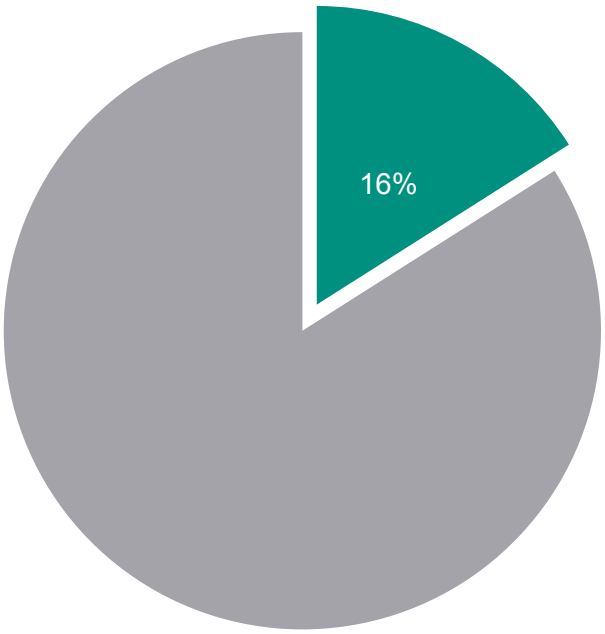



Figure 4: Proportion of Devonport residents who would like to see biodiversity supporting changes

Survey quotes from 3 Devonport residents:

“I love the untouched riverine flora and fauna, there are numerous threatened species. Very few cities have this on their doorstep - this needs to be protected.”

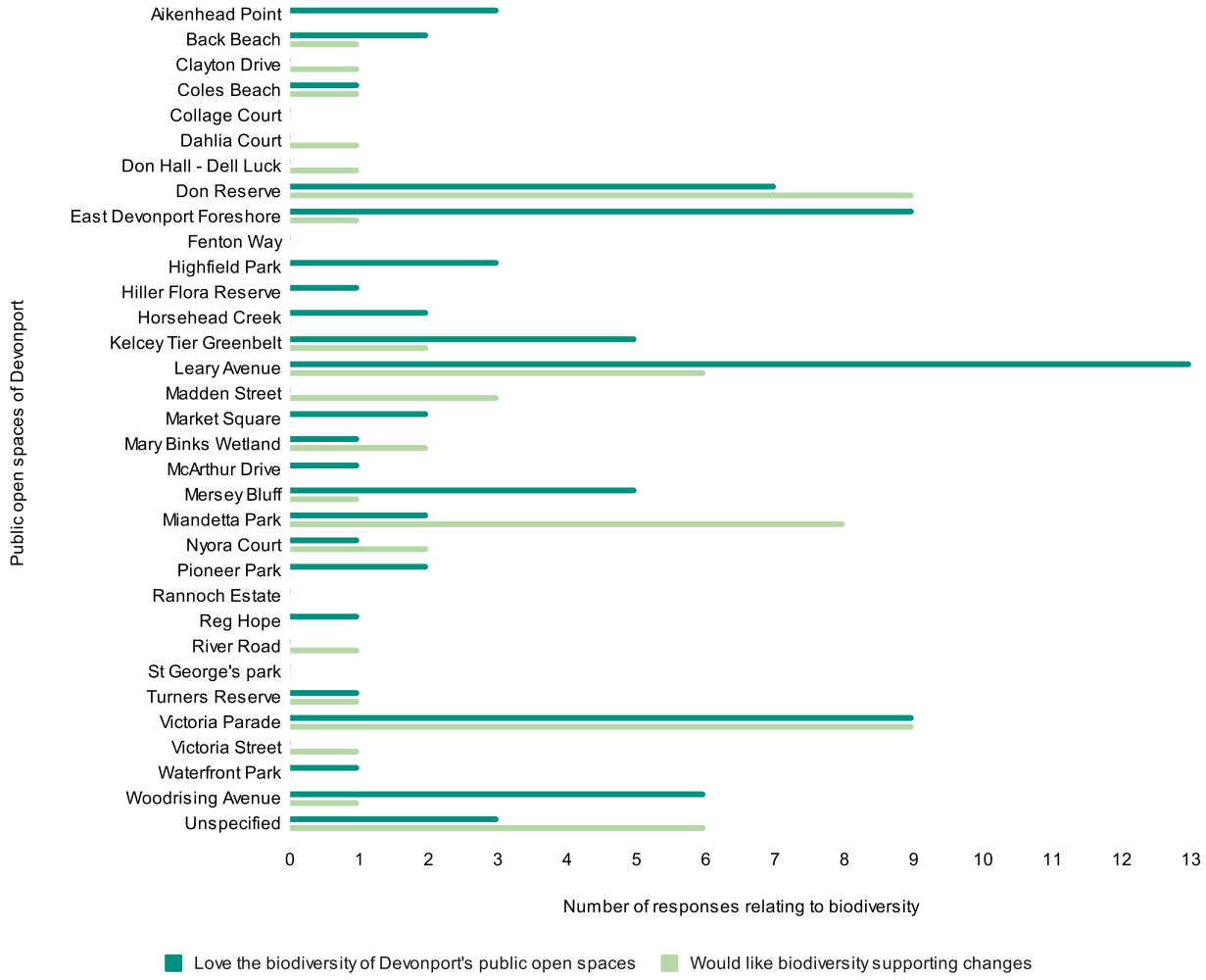
“Habitat loss is a huge concern.”

“When I get home late from work I can enjoy some natural areas. I can see bandicoots and some wallabies and sometimes a penguin or two. And it helps me rejuvinate from the natural world and eases stress.”

Figure 5 shows the number of respondents who had biodiversity related responses to the questions “what do you love most about this space?” and “what would you like to see more of in Devonport’s open spaces?” regarding public open spaces in Devonport.

These results indicate that the residents of Devonport value biodiversity significantly, affirming the relationship between biodiversity and loveability. Figure 5 shows that Leary Avenue, East Devonport Foreshore, and Victoria Parade received the highest frequency of biodiversity related responses and that the public have identified Miandetta Park, Victoria Parade and Don Reserve as spaces that require more biodiversity consideration.

Figure 5: Devonport residents' biodiversity related survey responses according to POS




## 5.2 GIS Mapping

In terms of GIS mapping, we produced four maps in total. Figure 6 displays the current public open space in Devonport, as classified into typologies of: general open space, recreational open space, public land and local government reserves. The map shows that open space in Devonport is predominantly focused along the northern coast and Don river. Figures 7 & 8 place 200m buffers around every open space polygon to identify the most significant gaps between POS, which are possible biodiversity 'wastelands' in regards to their lack of habitat connectivity. It is evident that the largest POS gaps are located in central Devonport.

Figure 9 displays the vegetation classes of public open spaces in the City of Devonport. A significant proportion of the POS land has been modified, with these parcels represented by their zone. When analysed in conjunction with table 2, we know that many of Devonport's vegetation classes provide core and known habitat or breeding grounds for many conservation significant species.

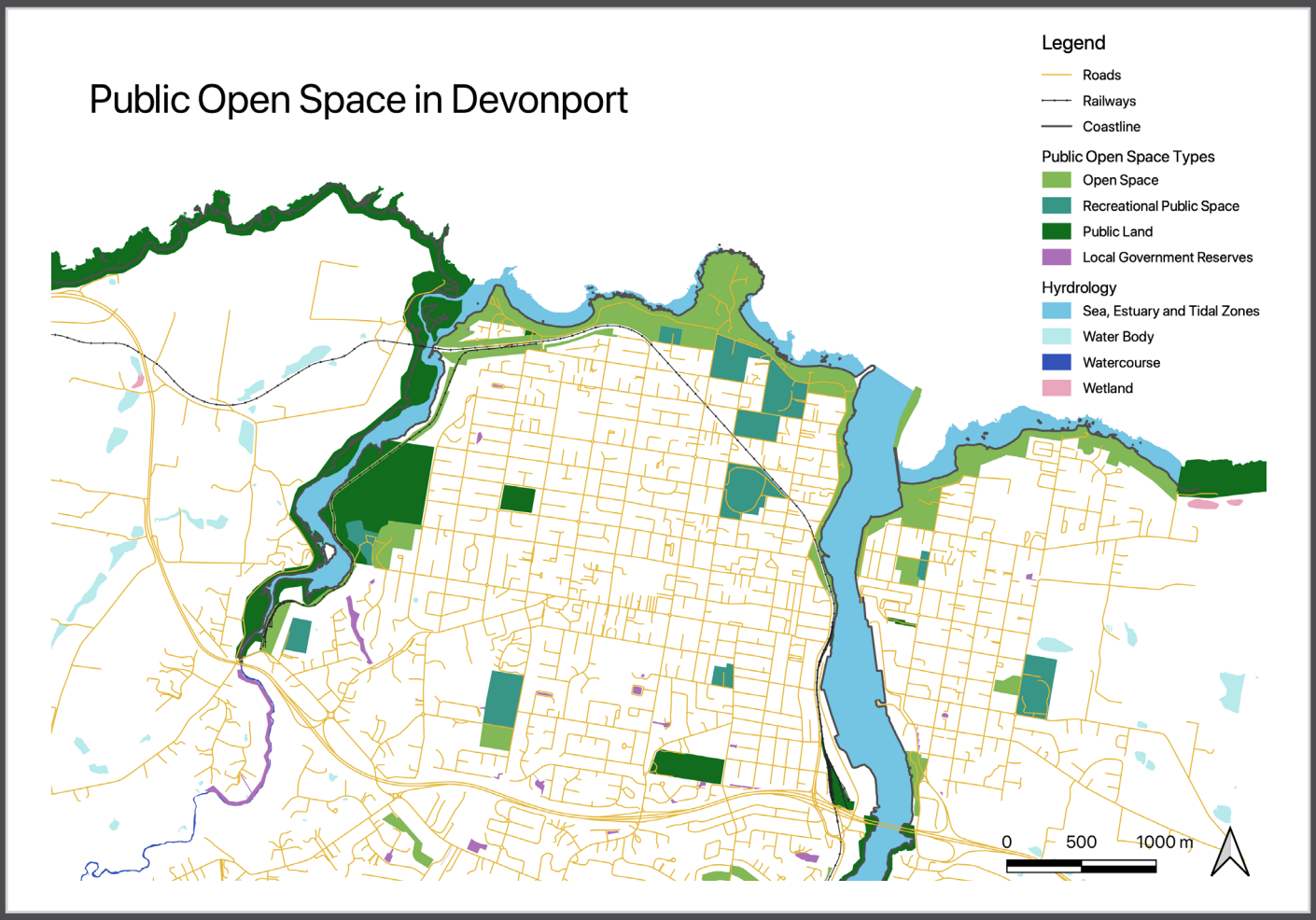



Figure 6: Public Open Space in Devonport

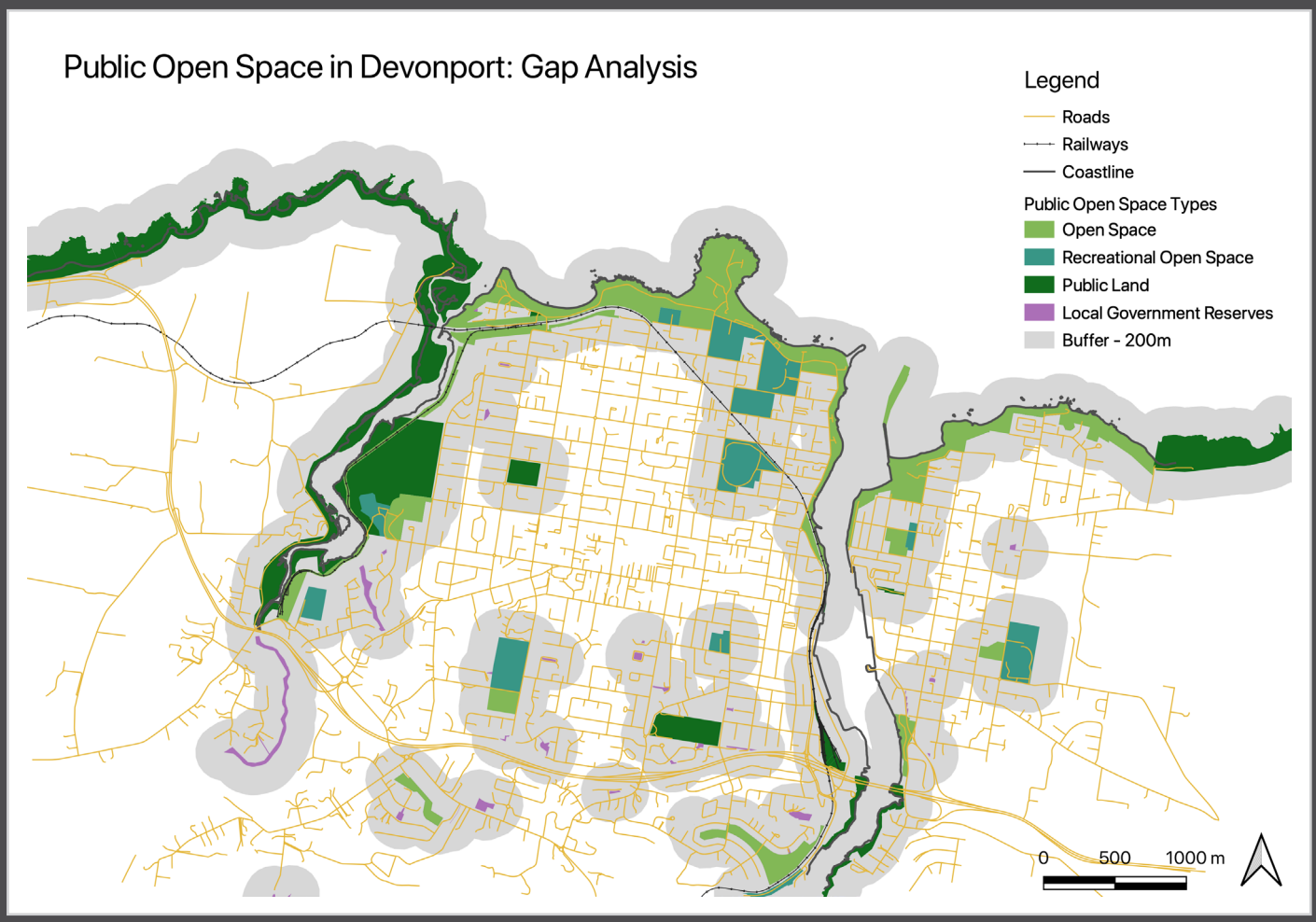



Figure 7: Public Open Space in Devonport Gap Analysis

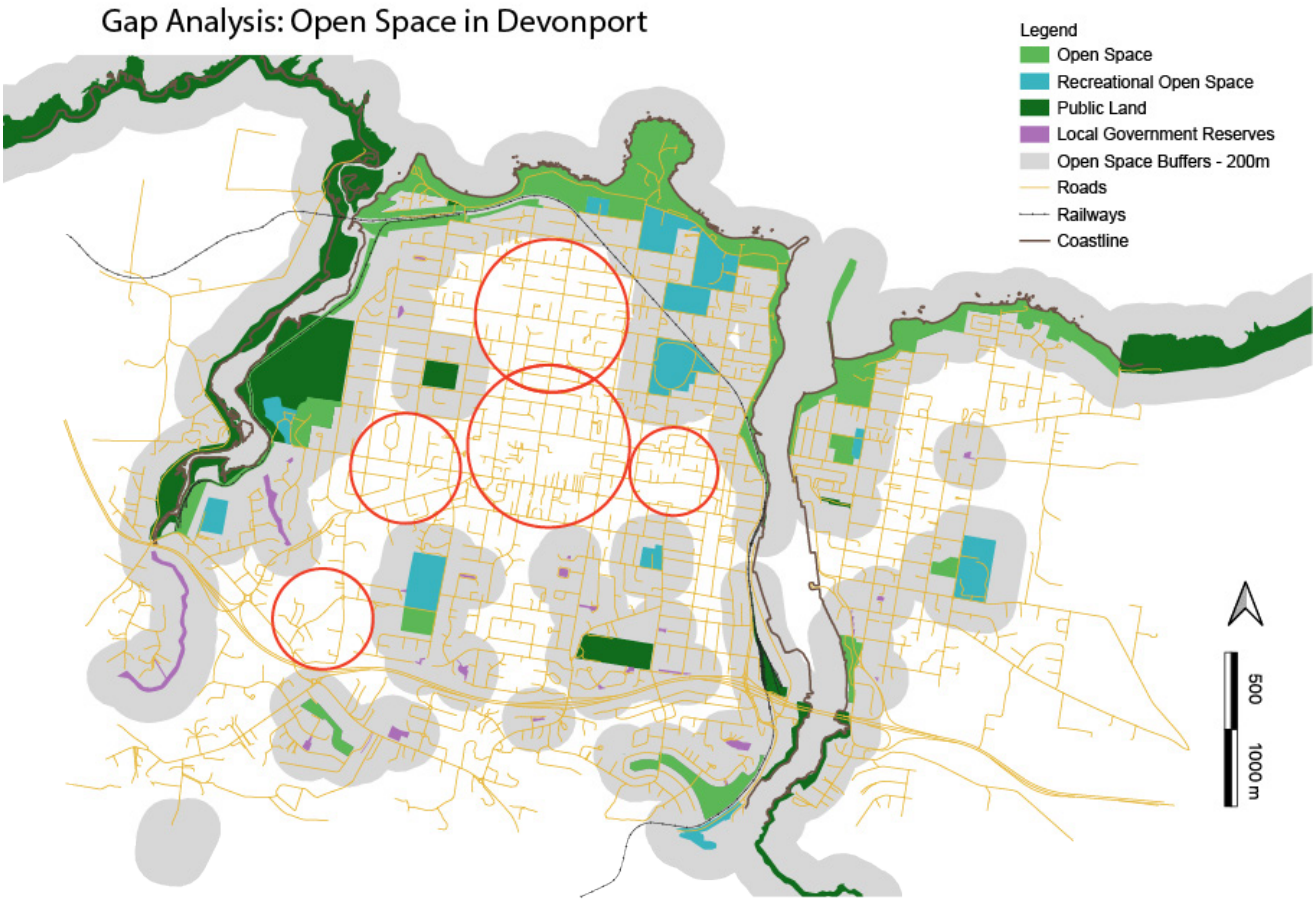



Figure 8: Public Open Space in Devonport Gap Analysis

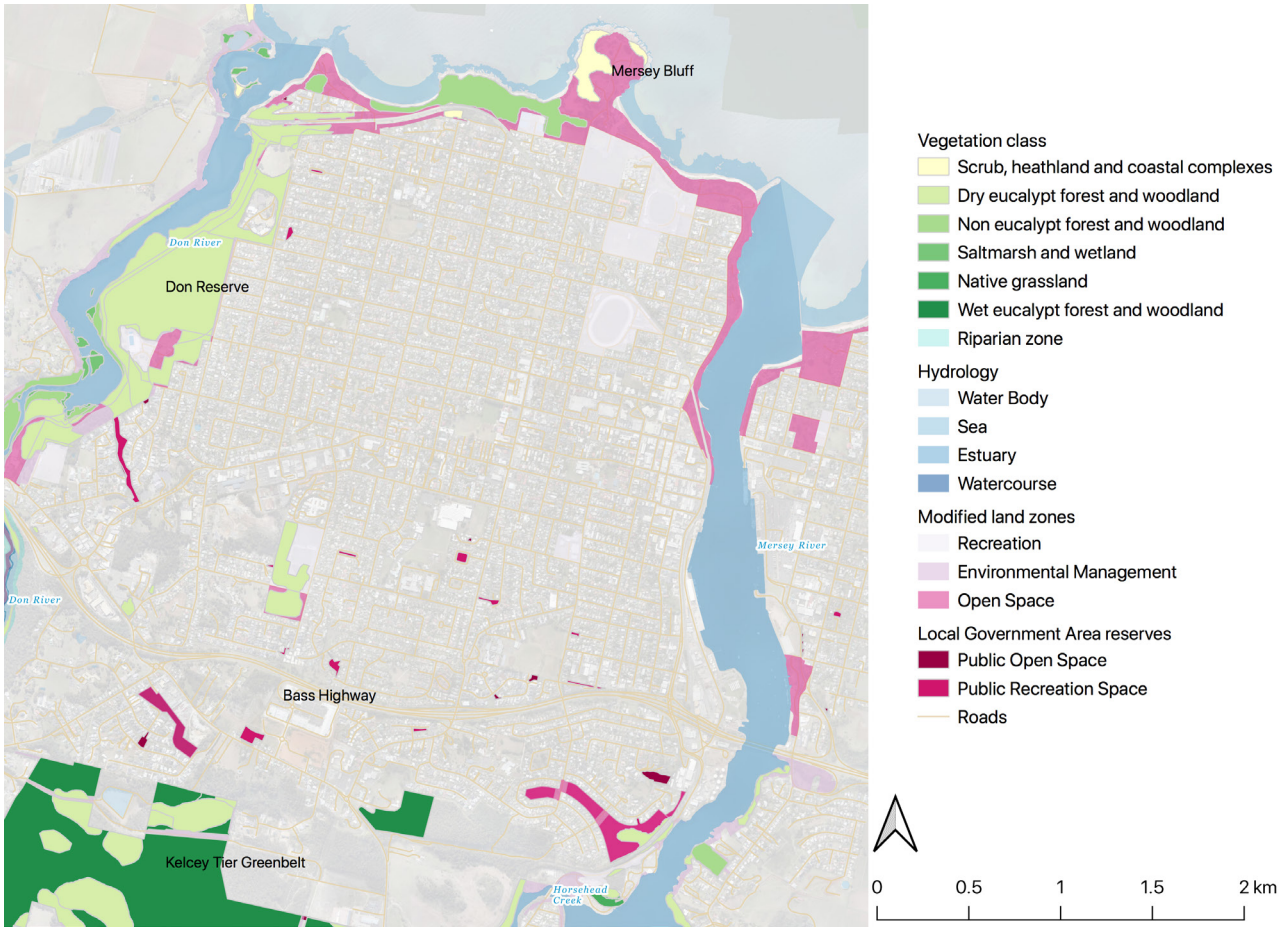



Figure 9: Vegetation Classes of Devonport

5.3 Habitat Analysis

Devonport is within the core range, known range, and breeding area of several conservation significant species. Table 2 presents these species, detailing their unique habitat needs and suggests a suitable vegetation class for their habitat, as visualised in figure 9.

Table 2: Conservation Significant Species in the City of Devonport

| | Species | Conservation Status | Habitat Needs | Suitable Vegetation Class |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Core Range | Azure Kingfisher *(Zeyx azureus diemenensis)* | Endangered | Forested riparian zone, overhanging vegetation for shade and capturung prey. Steep banks to create burrow nests. | Riparian zone |
| | Spotted-tailed quoll *(Dasyrurus macalatus macalatus)* | Vulnerable | Complex structure: high canopy, dense understorey, groundcover vegetation. Ability to create a burrow with small entrace - hollow logs, woody debris, caves/rocky crevices. | Wet eucalypt forest and woodland<br>Riparian zone |
| | Eastern quoll *(Dasyurus viverrinus)* | Endangered | Dry forests, native grasslands, heathland and scrub.<br>Requires rocks, logs and burrows to create a den. | Dry eucalypt forest and woodland<br>Scrub, heathland and coastal complexes<br>Native grassland |
| | Green and gold frog *(Litoria raniformis)* | Vulnerable | Large permanent water bodies preferred. Submerged vegetation important for breeding; grassland needed for foraging. Dense vegetation, debris, soil cracks needed for refuge. | Waterbodies<br>Watercourses<br>Riparian zone |
| | Masked owl *(Tyto novaehollandiae castanops)* | Vulnerable | Dry, native forest. Trees with large hollows (>15cm diameter).<br>Agricultural areas may hold remnant trees. | Dry eucalypt forest and woodland |
| Known Range | Central North burrowing crayfish *(Engeaus granulatus)* | Endangered | Undisturned wetlands and streams. Clayey soils preferred to support complex and extensive burrows.<br>This species is endemic to the Devonport area. | Wetlands, streams and waterbodies |
| Breeding Area | Swift parrot *(Lathamus discolor)* | Endangered | Species migrate to Tasmania in summer for breeding. Mature eucalypts needed to foraging and nesting. E Ovata preferred for foraging. | Dry eucalypt forest and woodland |

# 6.0 Discussion

### POS gaps: implications for bio-connectivity

The POS and gap analysis maps both clearly indicate a lack of public open space throughout the Devonport city centre. The open spaces are predominantly located around the outside of the city and along the coast, with some POS types also scattered in the city's south near the Bass Highway. The maps indicate that there appears to be ecological connectivity along the coast, through public spaces such as Mersey Bluff, Don Reserve and the Kelsey Tier Greenbelt. However, there is a substantial lack of bio-connectivity through the city centre, which may impede species' movement, reproduction and foraging activities. For any species attempting to move through the Devonport city centre, the urban matrix does not provide an interlinked habitat network, therefore undermining structural and functional connectivity. For bird species, this might not have a significant impact, however, for ground dwelling species like the eastern barred bandicoot and spotted tail quoll, the urban landscape impedes movement and imposes harsh edge effects. The Tasmanian Government's 'biodiversity values database' provides evidence of this as these ground-dwelling species are often the victims of road kill in Devonport (FPA Tasmania 2022).

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### Quality of existing POS

In addition to a lack of ecological connectivity throughout the centre of the city, many of the current POS in Devonport do not support quality habitat. Figure 10 visualises four local government reserves with high connectivity potential, while figure 11 illustrates the issues of vegetation structure in these parks.

These pocket parks host a turfed grass lawn area, between 3-7 trees each and lacking understory vegetation. Presence of turf grass lawn is a barrier to ecological conservation and supports minimal, if any, biodiversity (Aronson et al. 2017). Conversely, increased understory vegetation influences the occupancy of a range of species and provides quality habitat, increasing the occupancy of a range of taxa (Threlfall et al. 2017).

Whilst figure 11 does not represent all the POS across Devonport, it does display common trends including a strong presence of turf grass lawn, little to no understorey vegetation, scattered medium-large trees and minimal street trees. Devonport's current POS are lacking these vegetation attributes, most notably in terms of understorey volume. Evidently, many of the city's green spaces do not provide quality habitat. However, this can be enhanced through GI interventions, which may include: increasing understorey volume, increasing percentage of native plants, providing nesting boxes and introducing native grass species.

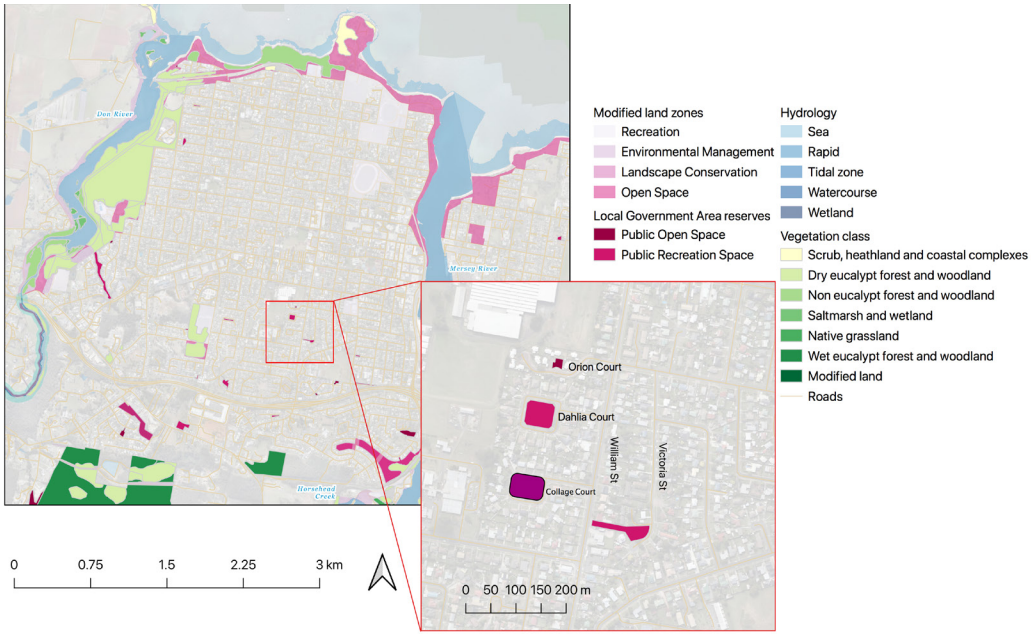


Figure 10: Local Government Reserve Pocket Parks: Orion Court, Dahlia Court and Collage Court

Figure 11: College Court pocket park
Source: google maps street view

Figures 12 & 13: William Street and Victoria Street, Devonport
Source: google maps street view

Rich qualitative data provided by the survey offered local site history: “I have lived in College Court for 20 years now and over that time the trees have died and been blown over but never replaced. I would like to see more trees planted to replace those that have been lost”, and insights into the vision the community has for these spaces: “Tasmanian native small trees and flowering shrubs [in Dahlia Court] to attract birds and provide a home for them”.

Along with Devonport’s strong perpetuation of turf grass lawn, Figures 12 and 13 reveals that there are limited street trees along Victoria Street and William Street, which is a recurring theme throughout the urban area, limiting the function and structural connectivity of nature strips.

**Existing Habitat for Endangered Species**

The data presented in table 2 and figure 9 explore the habitat needs of conservation significant species with their range known to be within the City of Devonport. Table 2 outlines seven vulnerable and endangered species, their unique habitat needs and vegetation classes which would offer suitable habitat attributes. Figure 9 visualises the natural vegetation class of public open spaces and the zoning of any parcels classed as modified land.
Combined, this data highlights areas of public open that must be considered for protection. Three endangered species are discussed in further detail.

**Swift Parrot** *(Lathamus discolor)*

The swift parrot is a migratory species which inhabits South-eastern mainland Australia in the winter and migrates to Tasmania for breeding season in the Summer. The species requires dry eucalypt forest environments that offer established hollows for breeding and nesting, with a preference towards swamp gums for foraging and feeding.

The key POS of interest for the swift parrot are situated along the eastern bank of the Don River and small patches north of the Bass Highway. Tree hollows are a significant asset, developed over long periods of time therefore protection of existing vegetation in this area is crucial. A tree younger than 100 years is unlikely to contain hollows, it can take as many as 200 years for a suitable hollow for nesting and breeding to form (Koch 2017).

**Central North Burrowing Crayfish** *(Engaeus granalatus)*

The central north burrowing crayfish range is limited to the greater Devonport area, therefore the City of Devonport has a responsibility to protect this unique creature. This species is rarely seen above ground, creating burrows in clayey soil surrounding wetlands, streams and waterbodies. The most significant proportion of suitable habitat is located between Mersey River and Figure of Eight Creek, within the Greater Devonport Local Government Area, but outside the core area of interest for this study. Other suitable habitat zones can be found between the third and fourth meander of the Don River, on both the east and west banks, and another portion of wetland surrounding the small island where Don River flows into Bass Strait. To protect this species, there should be no clearing of vegetation and native flora should be prioritised. Care should be taken if other surrounding areas of the POS are redeveloped, as machinery will compact the soil and degrade the habitat. (Threatened Species Section 2022)

**The Eastern Quoll** *(Dasyrus viverrinus)*

The eastern quoll is considered extinct on the mainland of Australia and only persists in the wild of Tasmania, therefore protection of its remaining habitat is crucial (Threatened Species Scientific Committee 2015). The key POS that offer remnant habitat to the eastern quoll are located on Mersey Bluff which offers a portion of scrub and heathland, two key parcels of dry forest are situated in the Kelcey Tier Greenbelt and a portion in the lower area of Devonport, north of the Bass Highway, in addition to a small patch of native grassland between south of the Bass Highway between Mersey River and Horsehead Creek. Roadkill is one of the major threats to this species, therefore mitigating connectivity barriers is key to their conservation (Jones 2000).

Image: swift parrot
Source: wilderness.org.au

**Roadkill as a result of limited connectivity**

As identified in the literature review and understood from the survey feedback, roadkill is a particular threat to species in the urban environment. This challenge can be mitigated to improve connectivity through the urban matrix of public open spaces. Increased connectivity also improves gene flow between isolated pockets of habitat, improving genetic diversity in animal populations (Kirk et al. 2021). Underpasses should be utilised to support burrowing animals such as quolls (see table 2), which are particularly vulnerable to road mortality (Jones 2000; Magnas et al. 2004). These crossings have two purposes; to limit the restriction on animal movement caused by roads and to reduce the level of resulting roadkill.

Tasmania has a unique issue as the only location where platypus are regularly reported as roadkill victims. The species seem to prefer crossing road surfaces rather than present crossings as culverts offered due to a number of factors such as the terrestrial habit of Tasmanian platypus and more significantly, access and safety of the passages (Magnas et al. 2004). Improvements to platypus crossings should include passageways wide enough so that the animal can turn around easily, placements along natural watercourses, and improved structural design to increase attractiveness for the animals to utilise the crossing (Australian Platypus Conservatory 2021).

Image: eastern quoll
Source: parks.tas.gov.au

# 7.0 Recommendations

**1. Maintain and protect existing assets**

Existing vegetation and native plant diversity are key attributes of urban areas that host high biodiversity (Threlfall et al. 2017). Existing natural assets are invaluable and irreplacable, therefore stewardship through responsible use and protection of the natural environment is imperitave to ensure intergenerational environmental equity.

This can be achieved through the following actions:

- Following the direction of The City of Devonport's tree policy (2021) which seeks to conserve and enhance the City's streetscapes, open space and bushland.
- All clearing and removal of existing native vegetation should be avoided and existing vegetation can be enhanced with plantings of native species identified in the Cradle Coast local planting guide (2013) to strengthen existing understory.
- Care must be taken when conducting works and upgrades to POS that borders or is nearby existing remnant vegetation to protect species from habitat disturbances.
- Implement WSUD strategies to mitigate pollutants from urban stormwater entering natural water systems and degrading habitat.
- Seek local knowledge and landcare engagement from the community of Devonport.

**2. Enhance existing public open spaces to increase habitat potential**

Enhancing existing open space is a fundamental requirement of biodiversity sensitive design (Kirk et al. 2021). As evident from our results and findings, many of the current public open spaces in the city of Devonport do not support quality habitat for species. Factors found through our research which contribute to the low habitat potential of the existing POS in Devonport include; high proportion of turfed lawn groundcover, a lack of understory, mid story and native vegetation, and a need for more canopy trees. There are a number of spaces of modified land, these spaces have been visualised in figure 9 by their zone. These spaces, in addition to local government area reserves, are ripe for enhancement.

This can be achieved through the following actions:

- Following the direction of The City of Devonport's tree policy (2021) which seeks to allocate budget resources for new tree planting projects, tree replacement and tree removal, and to plant new trees as part of Council projects where appropriate.
- Areas that necessitate turfed lawn (spaces used by sporting clubs, schools) can have their boundaries enhanced with garden beds hosting native flora and diverse vegetation structure.
- Implementing nesting boxes in green spaces where there is a lack of mature trees and tree hollows to improve connectivity for bird and mammal species.
- Collage Court, Dahlia Court, Orion Court have been identified by the community as spaces that require enhancement. These spaces require additional plantings of trees and other native vegetation to improve the capacity to support biodiversity and enjoyment of the community.

### 3. Increase connectivity between public open spaces using green infrastructure

Habitat connectivity is crucial to ecological stability, by allowing species to move, forage, reproduce and migrate, which prevents population bottlenecks and local extinctions (Pirnat & Hladnik 2019; Ignatieva, Stewart & Meurk 2011; Lepczyk et al. 2017; Garrad et al. 2017). Given that Devonport is highly urbanised yet still supports a significant biodiversity community, connectivity is critical to ensure species' survival now and into the future. As our GIS mapping has indicated, POS and habitat is predominantly located on the coast and along hydrological features. The centre of Devonport presents large open space gaps, which detract from bio-connectivity and provide harsh edge effects for species attempting to move through the urban matrix. Increased habitat connectivity can be achieved through the following actions:

- Increasing the amount street trees between POS, in line with the City of Devonport's tree policy (2021).
- Providing small pockets of habitat between POS to increase connectivity - this may require innovative solutions as the area is highly urbanised, which might include GI solutions such as green walls and green roofs (however, we acknowledge this may not be within Council scope).
- Increasing understorey vegetation along roads to mitigate harsh edge effects.
- Utilising wildlife overpasses on busy roads with high amounts of roadkill (such as the Bass Highway) to facilitate species' movement.
- Implementing wildlife underpasses on busy roads with high amounts of roadkill, to facilitate species' movement.

Whilst these strategies are effective at increasing habitat connectivity, their effectiveness often depends on the taxa's ability to move across a landscape. We suggest that further research could identify those species of highest conservation priority, which would inform the type of green infrastructure required to increase bio-connectivity.

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