

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Friday, 27 May 2022

REVITALISING DANDENONG'S HISTORIC POLICE PADDOCKS

The historic Dandenong Police Paddocks Reserve is about to be transformed into a welcoming green space where the community can go to relax, exercise, and learn about the park's historical and cultural significance.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio today announced \$5.5 million from the 2022/23 Victorian Budget to deliver a master plan to enhance and revitalise the reserve.

The master plan will be prepared through extensive consultation with the Traditional Owners, community groups and other organisations that use the park.

The final plan will incorporate equestrian trails, all ability access and address connectivity for the community. It will also create access to the nearby sports precinct, improved public safety with lighting and proposals to acknowledge the cultural and historic significance of the area.

Part of the funding includes a \$1 million program of early works beginning in 2023. This includes rebuilding or upgrading facilities like toilet blocks and picnic areas and addressing graffiti, vandalism and rubbish dumping. These works will also improve connections with Dandenong Creek Trail and surrounding wetlands and parks.

Stretching over almost 500 hectares, the Police Paddocks are home to more than 90 native plant species, including the Bare-limbed Swamp Paperbark, Flowering Swamp Gum and Bidgee-Widgee. Native animals like Wedge-tailed Eagles, Wombats and Eastern Grey Kangaroos, also live in the reserve.

On the lands of the Bunurong people, who called the place *Nerre Nerre Warrene*, the paddocks were home to the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate Station from 1840-43 as well as the headquarters of the Native Police Corps. They were later used as a resting site and stud for police horses.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"Victoria's parks and reserves are an important place for people to get out and enjoy nature, this plan will ensure the Dandenong Police Paddocks have a long and thriving future ahead."

"This investment will ensure the cultural and environmental values of the area are protected and enhanced, and the story of the area told for everyone to appreciate."

Quote attributable to Member for Dandenong Gabrielle Williams

"The Police Paddocks are a treasured local asset and a place of historical significance for First Nation's people and all Victorians."