

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
Minister for Environment



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NEW PARK BY THE COMMUNITY, FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Andrews Labor Government is set to deliver more than 35 hectares of parklands in Melbourne's southeast following a community-driven project to develop a new park plan.

Minister for Environment Ingrid Stitt released the *Healesville Freeway Reserve Park Layout Plan* – which outlines how the former freeway reserve between Forest Hill and Vermont will be brought to life, thanks to a \$10.5 million investment from the Labor Government.

The proposed park will include new play areas, picnic tables, shelters, BBQs and nearby amenities such as toilets and water fountains. It will also feature a 3.5 kilometre shared-use trail which will run the length of the park.

New signage will be installed across the park to provide information on local plants, animals and Wurundjeri cultural heritage and connection to Country.

The plan was finalised through a group of 30 passionate locals that guided priorities for the new park, including the types of facilities required and protection of the landscape.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has been a key partner in the development of the park plan. The corporation will choose a new name for the park.

A major vegetation strategy accompanies the plan to support the area's biodiversity. Gang Gang Cockatoos, kookaburras and echidnas are some of the wildlife that will benefit from new plantings. Weed removal programs and habitat like nesting boxes will further boost the area's environmental values.

Subject to on-ground and construction industry conditions, works to develop park features and facilities are expected to begin in early 2024.

To learn more and to access a copy of the new park plan, visit parks.vic.gov.au/projects/melbourne-region/healesville-freeway-reserve.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Ingrid Stitt

"We are continuing to expand and upgrade Melbourne's network of parks and green spaces."

"This new park will be a wonderful asset for the community, which I congratulate for helping to shape the look and layout of this unique stretch of green space."

Quote attributable to Member for Glen Waverley John Mullahy

"This parkland matters so much to our local community, and it is terrific that the Andrews Labor Government has ensured it remains in the hands of the community. Local families will enjoy the improved open space and amenities for years to come."

Quote attributable to Member for North-Eastern Metropolitan Shaun Leane

"I look forward to watching the park take shape over the coming 18 months as it becomes a place where people can get active, spend time with family and friends, and simply enjoy being in nature."

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