

Parks and Recreation - Open Space Strategy

This is an initiative of MCC to assist the planning of parkland for residents and visitors to enjoy now and into the future. The City of Melbourne has undertaken an analysis of the existing open space for Carlton, based on the size, type, ease of access and future population. Council's criteria is one hectare of open space for every 1,000 people and provision of parkland within 300m of households. Carlton was assessed to have adequate parkland. However this was arrived at only by including Princes Park, which represents two thirds of the identified public open space and is remote for most Carlton residents (further than 300m) being typically 1km from central Carlton and separated by two very busy arterial roads. It therefore cannot reasonably be regarded as accessible parkland for Carlton residents and visitors. The reality is that open space for Carlton residents is only around 0.7 ha per 1000 people. CRA's 'Open Space Strategy, Carlton Area' response is below:

Open Space Strategy Response

The Carlton Residents Association commends the City of Melbourne for initiating a review of open space strategy within the city. Parkland is very important in Carlton, as many residents have little or no green space at home. Several critical issues raised in the draft strategy document "Open Space Strategy, Carlton Area", require comment:

- 1. Public Open Space:** The draft strategy contends that Carlton is well served by existing parkland when compared with an arbitrary minimum target of 1 ha per 1000 people. The Carlton figure of 2 ha per 1000 is arrived at only by including Princes Park. This park represents two thirds of the identified public open space and is remote from most Carlton residents (further than 300m). Princes Park is typically 1km from central Carlton and is separated from it by two very busy arterial roads. It cannot reasonably be regarded as accessible parkland for Carlton residents and visitors. The reality is that open space for residents is around 0.7 ha per 1000 people, significantly less than Council's target figure.
- 2. Private Open Space:** Around half the population of Carlton lives on the public housing estate. The currently proposed redevelopment on the site removes 4 ha of open space and allocates it to a private housing development of 550 units. The reinstatement of Drummond Street through the estate, to provide desirable street address for the private development will remove further valuable open space on the estate. Applying the Council's open space strategy to the housing estate would require 5-6 ha be allocated for this purpose. It is evident that 5% of this area has been allocated. The community garden on the Lygon/Rathdowne Precinct is to be relocated to the south of the site, and will be overshadowed by high-rise buildings.
- 3. Historic Garden Squares:** The three historic garden squares bequeathed to Carlton 150 years ago have over the last ten years been progressively whittled away; concrete now predominates on these squares and restricts their use as open space. Half of University Square has become a concrete car park roof. A significant portion of Lincoln Square was allocated to a memorial for the Bali victims; a large section stretching right along Swanston St was concreted. The skateboard park which resulted certainly does not provide the quiet contemplation Bali victims' families were promised. Similarly half of Argyle Square, which provided much needed open green space for sport and recreation has been replaced by a shadeless terrazzo/concrete 'piazza'. Here community and visitors are offered 'passive recreation'.
- 4. Recreation opportunities:** The range of recreational activities provided is severely limited. For example, Carlton Gardens South; this is indeed beautiful, but struggles to retain heritage listing because of annual degradation by MIFGS, and is annually closed to the public for six weeks. Carlton Gardens North is an excellent and beautiful activities area, and is visited by large numbers of residents and visitors. It includes the only public playground in Carlton, to which access is severely limited by distance and major roads. For example the Housing Estate, home of the majority of Carlton's children, have this major access problem. Even the two second-rate playgrounds on the housing estate are to be sacrificed for a private housing development.
- 5. Distribution of open space:** Reinstatement of median strips in Cardigan and Faraday streets would to some extent allay the paucity of green space in the area bounded by Grattan St, Swanston St, Cemetery Rd East, Lygon and Elgin Streets.