

Yarra Park Master Plan Universal Design & Accessibility Review – Consultation Version August 2025

Prepared By:

Nick Morris – Director

Zack Alcott – Co-CEO



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Infrastructure	4
Operations	5
Universal Design.....	6
Universal Design Principles	7
Legislation & Regulations	8
Key Regulations and Standards.....	9
User Experience	9
Accessibility Review.....	11
Summary	18

Executive Summary

4.5 million Australians or 20% of the population have either a physical or non-physical disability. When you include Australia's ageing population that also require accessibility support, the challenge for The Melbourne Cricket Club in servicing these members and patrons' needs is a large one.

Yarra Park is intrinsically linked as a key hub and interface to the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Melbourne Park and Birrarung Mar precincts. The significance of Yarra Park to First Nations cannot be understated given its proximity to the Yarra river, while organised sport dating back to the 1850s is key significance.

The Yarra Park Master Plan 2025 provides a planning framework for future projects within Yarra Park to be realised. The Master Plan presents a series of opportunities for how the park might evolve over the coming 10-15 years.

Importantly, Yarra Park will be retained as the Yarra Park that local residents, visitors, sports fans and tourists know and love. The Master Plan proposes a series of both individual and interlinked projects aimed to ensure the longevity of the park; things that will improve safety, protect and enhance the avenues of trees, make the park's spaces more functional, and recognise the important Aboriginal cultural heritage and colonial history.

Strategically Yarra Park is an important green space at the edge of the city. Home to the MCG and Punt Road Oval, it is an integral part of Melbourne's Sports and Entertainment Precinct.

The Yarra Park Master Plan 2025 has been drafted with the benefit of extensive community and stakeholder engagement and technical inputs. The Master Plan identifies opportunities to undertake physical works within the park to make functional and operational improvements. It also identifies a series of other opportunities that might not result in immediate physical changes to the park, but that once complete will provide important guides, strategies and frameworks for the use and maintenance of Yarra Park in the future.

In 2020 Morris Goding Access Consulting (MGAC) have partnered with Get Skilled Access (GSA) to review the site and create a gap analysis of the precinct to ensure the overall Master Plan reflects a high standard of accessibility and Universal Design.

A gap analysis was performed to assess the current level of accessibility at Yarra Park and compare it against relevant accessibility standards, legislation, or best practice. The analysis is not limited to people with disability, rather it considers people with accessibility needs. The broader scope of users is important when considering people who are aging adults, young families, have intermittent occurrences, through to those people who suffer from fatigue during the course of a game, event or visit.

A key consideration of the gap analysis is the current provision of infrastructure, around and within Yarra Park for people with accessibility needs, which includes:

- Linkages to surrounding precincts

- Accessible parking within and external to Yarra Park i.e. National Tennis Centre
- Accessible drop offs for private vehicles, taxi and Uber vehicles adjacent to and external to Yarra Park
- Accessible public transport including train and low floor trams
- Richmond Football Club redevelopment
- Pathway linkages within the site
- Accessible amenities within the park
- Locations of events, food and beverage overlay within the park
- Impact that wet weather has on the accessibility of the park

As a result of the site visit and review of Yarra Park the key findings of the GAP analysis are set out below:

Infrastructure

- Provision of accessibility specific parking in Yarra Park for everyday use, in locations of minimal gradient and crossfall with all-weather connection to the concourse
- Provision of an everyday and match day accessibility specific drop off and pick up that has minimal crossfall or gradient – Jolimont Terrace
- Discuss with Richmond Football Club the accessible parking capacity and operation for the reservation of parking
- Liaise with Melbourne & Olympic Park Trust to discuss if the National Tennis Centre parking could increase provision for accessible parking
- Detail the current and proposed capacity of the MCG Accessibility Shuttle (the G-Train)
- Develop accessible event spaces within the parkland, including temporary overlay, in particular accessible toilet installation
- Create several mobility hubs / meeting points around the whole of Yarra Park that include:
 - Accessible pathways i.e. no brick kerbs or bluestone interfaces
 - All weather surfaces that allow people to wait for the accessible shuttle, off the main pathways
 - Rest seating
 - Lighting
 - Drinking fountains
 - Child safe space
 - Undercover
 - Staff managed

- Create a number of amenities blocks within the park or within the MCG that could be external facing that may include:
 - Male, female, and accessible toilets
 - All gender toilets
 - Parent room
 - Quiet / Sensory rooms
 - Changing Places facility
- Consideration of an external facing 'Changing Places' facility that could be used before a patron entered the MCG
- Create hearing hubs around the concourse, where low level speakers can be provided, where people who use hearing aids or are hard of hearing where presentations, announcement or entertainment can be heard

Operations

- Create a parking and ticketing system that can be independent of each other yet integrated for events or games
- Update website and communications to reflect the upgraded infrastructure and operations of the precinct
- Create an accessibility specific signage and wayfinding system
- Discuss with Richmond Football Club the accessible parking capacity and operation for the reservation of accessible parking
- Liaise with Melbourne & Olympic Park Trust to discuss if the National Tennis Centre parking could increase provision for accessible parking
- Consider a mobility hub in conjunction with Travellers Aid at the precinct for match days and events
- Update website and communications to reflect the upgraded infrastructure and operations of the precinct
- Create an accessibility specific signage and wayfinding system
- Discuss with Richmond Football Club the accessible parking capacity and operation for the reservation of accessible parking
- Liaise with Melbourne & Olympic Park Trust to discuss if the National Tennis Centre parking could increase provision for accessible parking
- Consider a mobility hub in conjunction with Travellers Aid at the precinct for match days and events

This document has been updated in 2025 to provide commentary on the recommendations that were made and what will be implemented in the development of the Yarra Park Master Plan 2025.

Universal Design

Universal Design (UD) highlights seven principles that allow everyone, to the greatest extent possible, and regardless of age or disability, to use buildings, transport, products, and services without the need for specialised or adapted features.

UD principles help to provide more inclusive facilities, services, operations or management rather than just prescribing the minimum standards within building codes.

In 2012, the principles of UD were expanded to include eight goals. The goals of UD sought to further define how the environment could be developed for all people.

When applied successfully, the key beneficiaries include:

- Families who use strollers or have young children
- People with visible and non-visible disabilities
- The aging population
- People with temporary injuries, fatigue easily or those with recurring illnesses
- Diverse community members be they large or short stature, trans or intersex or queer or body image or neurodiversity considerations
- Cyclists (including recumbent and hand cyclist) or people using end of trip facilities
- Non-English speaking
- Service and Emergency services personnel
- Mass movement of people e.g. emergency evacuation

Universal Design Principles



Equitable Use	The design encapsulates the needs of the whole community without disadvantaging or stigmatising any one individual or group e.g. Changing Places facility
Flexibility in Use	The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities e.g. All gender toilets
Simple and Intuitive Use	Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level e.g. use of pictograms to highlight stadium features
Perceptible Information	The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of the ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities e.g. new wayfinding technologies such as "Blind Square"
Tolerance for error	The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences do accidental or unintended actions e.g. the primary pathway is the accessible pathway for all
Low physical effort	The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue e.g. the vertical rises have a selection of lifts, ramps and escalators
Size and Space for approach and use	Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility e.g. accessible toilets with baby change tables

Legislation & Regulations

Alongside the provision of Universal Design, legislative requirements ensure accessibility to the built environment and access to services required by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The DDA is the Federal legislation that supports the rights of the 20% of Australia's population who have a disability, their carer's, companions, or associates to functional, independent, equitable and dignified access to premises and services.

The Access to Premises Standard (APS) highlights the minimum level of compliance requirements for accessibility or Deemed to Satisfy provisions, as required under the NCC 2019. The Australian Standards, in particular the AS1428 suite, references the technical requirements of the built environment. Where a technical compliance to the NCC cannot be achieved, a performance solution or alternative building solution, can be sought. The performance solution must as a minimum, demonstrate an equivalent modification, development, or operation as to the Deemed to Satisfy requirements that are unable to be met or "reasonable adjustment" under the DDA.

Where this is not achieved a "complaint maybe placed with Human Rights and Equal Opportunity commission for conciliation or a claim of "unjustifiable hardship", heard by the Building Appeals Board in the relevant State of the development.

Key Regulations and Standards

Key regulations and standards include the following:

- NCC Part D3 – Access for People with a Disability
- NCC Part E3 – Passenger Lifts
- NCC Part F2 – Sanitary and Other Facilities
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992
- National Construction Code 2016
- AS1428.1 2009 Part 1: General requirements for access – new building work
- AS1428.2 1992 Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements – Buildings and facilities
- AS1428.4.1 2009 Part 4.1: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment – TGSIs
- AS2890.6 2009 Part 6: Off-street parking for people with disability
- AS1735.12 1999 Lift facilities for people with disabilities

User Experience

In December of 2019, GSA were commissioned to undertake an “Accessibility and Inclusion” review of the Spectator Experience at the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) and MCG. This review was also relevant to Yarra Park.

This review, although specific to the MCG, did contain several key recommendations and observations directly relating to accessibility to the Yarra Park precinct and then onto the MCG. Parking and drop-off/pick up was identified as one of the biggest barriers to access for MCC Members and visitors

An excerpt from the report highlighted the following:

- The lack of accessibility in the carpark and signage
- The inconsistent information of accessibility drop-off/pick off zone offered by staff.
- Long wait times in dimly lit accessibility drop-off/pick off zone with MCC Members and visitors feeling unsafe or exposed to wet conditions and changing weather conditions.
- The pathways throughout the car parks are a perceived safety hazard and avoided by people with disability. Pathways are either gravel, grass or cobble stone all of which are hazardous for people with mobility needs.
- Lack of visible signage of where rideshare and taxi pick up drop off is
- Wheelchair users unable to use the Travellers Aid service
- A lack of knowledge about the Travellers Aid service being available and the times in which it is available

- A lack of shelter from the weather once leaving the stadium
- Yarra Park completely non accessible in wet conditions
- No other alternative accessible parking option when MCC are forced to close Yarra Park parking due to weather conditions
- Entry into the MCG can be often intimidating and feeling unsafe in a large crowd for an MCC Member and visitor with disability
- Exiting the MCG and through car parks, pick up points and public transport can often cause challenges and delays moving through a large crowd for an MCC Member and visitor with disability
- Distance patrons need to travel from Punt Road oval to the MCG
- The location of accessible car parks was also raised as a prominent issue for MCC Members specifically as they are located on the opposite side of the ground to the MCC Members entry point. This results in MCC Members often being exhausted by the time they navigate from the car park to the entry.
- The ability to quickly and easily access your chosen mode of transport to leave the venue

Accessibility Review

The following highlights the key modes of access to the Yarra Park precinct. For each mode an assessment has been carried out to identify the issues and positives of each. Recommendations for improvements have also been developed. The final column expands on how the recommendations have been incorporated through the Yarra Park Master Plan 2025.

Transport mode	Issues	Positives	Recommendations	Yarra Park Master Plan 2025
Pedestrian - City	- Distances and significant gradients i.e. William Barake bridge - Birrarung Mar has limited accessibility between levels	- With the right assistance or mobility aid it can be an enjoyable journey - Public amenities adjacent to Zinc	- Identify if the G Train can extend to the William Barak bridge - Accessible tram to National Tennis centre would provide enhanced accessibility and minimise distances and gradients.	- The Master Plan will explore expanding the G-Train route to the start of the William Barak Bridge - Public transport opportunities will be considered in mechanisms outside of the Master Plan.

Transport mode	Issues	Positives	Recommendations	Yarra Park Master Plan 2025
Pedestrians – MCG concourse	- Brick swale drains are not safe nor accessible - Walkway / roadways are steep with bluestone “vehicle slowers” that are a pedestrian hazard - Decomposed granite is not concrete stabilised and difficult to wheel on - No meeting / waiting hubs - Some of the expansion joints have exposed edges or well in excess of the 5mm threshold	“G train” operates adjacent to Punt Road oval, Jolimont station and the accessible parking (Jolimont Terrace side) - Once on the concourse it has a consistent all-weather surface	- Create a number of undercover meeting areas / hubs on the outer concourse of the MCG - All weather surfaces that allow people to wait for the accessible shuttle, off the main pathways - Rest seating - Lighting - Drinking fountains - Child safe space - Undercover - Staff managed	- The Master Plan proposes temporary accessible hubs on event days - Event day hubs will incorporate a range all features. Permanent drinking fountains will be available elsewhere in the park

Transport mode	Issues	Positives	Recommendations	Yarra Park Master Plan 2025
Train stations - Richmond	• Not independently accessible due to excessive ramp gradients • Uneven platforms • Large crowd numbers • Significant distance from MCG • Limited numbers of kerb ramps to cross Brunton Avenue • Major renovation required to enhance it • No public amenities	• Links directly to the accessible G train • With assistance the station can be a key transport hub	1. Continue to Flinders street station and accessible tram (Tram 70) to National tennis centre	1. Public transport opportunities will be considered in mechanisms outside of the Master Plan.
Train stations - Jolimont	• Steep pathway • Steep ramps to the platforms • Large crowd numbers	• Links directly to the accessible G train • With assistance the station can be a key transport hub	1. Train to Flinders street and accessible tram to National Tennis centre stop	1. Public transport opportunities will be considered in mechanisms outside of the Master Plan.

Transport mode	Issues	Positives	Recommendations	Yarra Park Master Plan 2025
	- Major renovation required to enhance it - No public amenities, aside from the Pullman	With assistance the station can be a key transport hub		
Low floor tram stop – Melbourne Park (Stop 7b – Rod Laver Arena)	- Not every tram is accessible - Steep ramp to overpass bridge and Gate 1	With assistance there is direct access to the concourse	Don't stop at National Tennis centre tram, proceed to National Tennis centre stop	Public transport opportunities will be considered in mechanisms outside of the Master Plan.
Low floor tram stop – National Tennis Centre (Stop 7c – John Cain Arena)	- Not every tram is accessible - Lift access direct to MCG concourse	- Fully accessible location - Accessible parking Undercover drop off / pickup	- Highlight as a key precinct hub for accessibility - Discuss with MOPT availability for additional accessible carparking	Public transport opportunities will be considered in mechanisms outside of the Master Plan.
Private vehicle drop offs – Swan Street	- Large distances to MCG - Limited signage to highlight accessible route to National Tennis centre lift	- Good patron capacity - Accessible with universally flush kerb	Highlight the Olympic Boulevard taxi rank as a key drop off / pick up to the MCG	The Master Plan includes an opportunity to Review opportunities to provide dedicated private hire vehicle and

Transport mode	Issues	Positives	Recommendations	Yarra Park Master Plan 2025
				kiss 'n ride pick-up and drop-off locations and additional taxi ranks at strategic locations within accessible distance of Yarra Park.
Drop offs – Jolimont Terrace	- No formal drop offs - Used by limousines and other vehicles - Has reasonable gradients and crossfalls	Short distance to concourse	Provision of accessible drop off on or adjacent to Jolimont Terrace and Jolimont street	The Master Plan highlights that Drop-off and pick-up locations at Jolimont Terrace and Brunton Avenue should be designed to cater for wheelchair users.
Drop off – National Tennis centre	Controlled by MOPT	- Under cover - Well designed with direct kerb ramp access from roadway - Lift to upper concourse within close proximity	- Discuss with MOPT to provide an accessibility specific drop off, not only for the MCG but MOPT events - Provision of event staff to coordinate drop offs	The Master Plan includes an opportunity to Review opportunities to provide dedicated private hire vehicle and kiss 'n ride pick-up and drop-off locations and additional taxi ranks at strategic locations within accessible distance of Yarra Park.

Transport mode	Issues	Positives	Recommendations	Yarra Park Master Plan 2025
Parking – City	- Long distances from the MCG - Most car parks don't list if they have accessible parking		Link to route 70 tram to John Cain Arena and lift to upper concourse	Consideration of car parking options in the City is out of scope of the Master Plan.
Parking – Yarra Park	- Poor locations i.e. grass and gradients - Not an all weather surface with unsafe brick kerbs and bluestone pavers across the asphalt walkways / roadways - Yarra park map doesn't show accessible parking locations	Direct access to the concourse	- Highlight a number of areas that could use an all weather surfaces to provide a number of accessible spaces. - The accessible spaces could be located a distance from the concourse yet be serviced by the G Train	The Master Plan includes an opportunity that would Review the locations and surface treatments of dedicated accessible public parking zones and ensure appropriate access is provided to nearby pathways. Accessible car parking locations should be integrated with the G-Train and include an accessible hub.

Transport mode	Issues	Positives	Recommendations	Yarra Park Master Plan 2025
Parking – National Tennis Centre	• Very difficult to book – Ticketek phone or email • Limited availability of spaces	• Undercover, • Direct access to a lift to the upper concourse to the MCG • Tram stop 7c located immediately adjacent	1. Liaise with the MOPT / National Tennis Centre to create an accessible parking hub for major MCG events at the National Tennis centre parking	2. The Master Plan includes an opportunity that would Review the locations and surface treatments of dedicated accessible public parking zones and ensure appropriate access is provided to nearby pathways. Accessible car parking locations should be integrated with the G-Train and include an accessible hub.

Summary

Yarra Park is arguably the most versatile and well-trodden parkland in Australia. On any given week, particularly during football or cricket season, upwards of 200,000 people use the park. The reasons for use vary significantly and include:

- Everyday parkland e.g., walking the dog
- Everyday access to the MCG e.g., functions or the Australian Sports Museum
- MCG events e.g., sporting or entertainment
- MCG Mega events – Security overlay mode
- Entertainment showcases in Yarra Park – linked to an MCG event or stand alone
- Overflow space for Melbourne Park precinct

The preparation of the new Yarra Park Master Plan 2025 creates an opportunity to update many of the limitations of the existing venue and its surrounds. Creating multiple transport options, with some preferred over others ensures that Universal Design principles can be applied not only to increase the “family friendly” appeal and amenity, but also decrease the operational and temporary overlay reliance.

Aside from the obvious limitations of Yarra Park such as topographical and outdated transport hubs, linking adjoining precincts to provide accessible facilities and linkages will ensure that Yarra Park is not only the entry portal to the MCG, but is also destination for recreational and social outcomes for all people including those with accessibility needs

Review by



Nick Morris – Director
ACAA Accredited Access Consultant – 275



Zack Alcott – Co-CEO

