



17 August 2018

Open Space Team
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Re: Chain of Ponds - Moonee Ponds Creek Plan

Dear Sir/Madam,

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) strongly supports the work of the Moreland City Council and Moonee Valley City Council in jointly developing the *Chain of Ponds - Moonee Ponds Creek Plan*, a draft action plan for the Moonee Ponds Creek. This draft plan “reimagines the Moonee Ponds Creek as a healthy, vibrant destination which supports native plants and animals, provides green space for leisure and recreation, and helps prevent flooding”.

The National Trust is an independent not-for-profit organisation established in 1956. The mission of the National Trust is to “inspire the community to appreciate, conserve and celebrate its built, natural and cultural heritage”. We congratulate the Moreland City Council and the Moonee Valley City Council for their collaborative approach to managing the natural and cultural values of the Moonee Ponds Creek, recognising that these values don’t stop at municipal boundaries. Linking this important strategic work up with the surrounding municipalities of the City of Hume and the City of Melbourne will be incredibly important, and we support the extension of the study area into these municipalities to incorporate the entire creek catchment.

We strongly support both councils in endorsing the document and its approach, as well as gaining endorsement from Melbourne Water and the Collaboration Group. We also strongly encourage both councils to undertake advocacy to the State Government regarding the importance of the plan, and their role in implementing it, particularly when planning large infrastructure projects and initiatives.

The guiding principles of the document are well considered, and provide guidance on a range of environmental, social, cultural, economic and governance outcomes. The focus on re-establishing the visibility and identity of the creek as an important cultural landscape in the creation and extension of a linear park is supported by the National Trust. We are pleased that the plan to date reflects best practice for landscape planning and design, minimising the use of energy, water and other resources and we submit that this intent be ongoing. The continued planning for this linear park should aim to protect the range of existing natural, cultural and landscape values of the creek as well as ensuring a wide range of compatible community use. We expect that this will be achieved through ongoing and meaningful consultation and collaboration with local communities in the design process and continued through volunteer involvement in on-ground works, community education and interpretation services.

With regard to the Cultural Heritage guiding principle: ‘Acknowledge and celebrate the Wurundjeri and other cultural heritage of the creek’ and the associated goals and actions documented in the plan. We are pleased that consultation with Wurundjeri Elders was

undertaken as a key component of the *Chain of Ponds - Moonee Ponds Creek Plan*. We support the goals documented on page 315 of the plan under implementation. We note use of lower case 'i' for Indigenous and submit that any use of this word in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage should be capitalised. With regard to consultation with Wurundjeri, we advocate for this to be ongoing and collaborative, leading to meaningful outcomes led by the Wurundjeri in the ongoing custodianship, design, interpretation and experience of the Moonee Ponds Creek. With regard to due diligence and Cultural Heritage Management Plans in planning processes, given the established significance of the Moonee Ponds Creek to the Wurundjeri, we would expect that Cultural Heritage Management Plans are prepared not only "when required when implementation works" but are always produced when implementing significant works within the creek corridor. This represents best practice, recognising that not all places of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity are recorded.

We note that extensive research and community consultation has informed the *Chain of Ponds* document, informing an understanding of the Moonee Ponds Creek under 'section b. Chronology'. We submit that a large number of these values should be visible and interpreted across the project scope, including under 'Cultural Heritage'. Many of the values documented in this section contribute to an understanding of the cultural landscape of the creek, its histories, places of significance, and social value. As such we suggest that the interpretation of the wide range of values captured in the plan should be included as a goal under 'Cultural Heritage', recognising what is termed "other cultural heritage of the creek" under that guiding principle. This could include interpretive signage, integration into the linear park design strategies or education and community engagement programs organised in partnership with the Councils.

We strongly support the goal documented under 'Environment - Ecology' which states "Retain and protect significant vegetation and increase corridor width to better support the ecological function and integrity of the creek". The National Trust encourages both councils to pursue the action under this goal to introduce mechanisms such as planning controls to protect and enhance vegetation on both public and private land, including options for expanding environmental overlays. We submit that this work should be undertaken with expert advice that is in line with the VPP Planning Practice Note 'Vegetation Protection in Urban Areas'.

In conclusion, the National Trust commends the collaborative approach taken by the Moreland City Council and Moonee Valley City Council in the development of the *Chain of Ponds - Moonee Ponds Creek Plan*, recognising the importance of this waterway to communities, culture and the environment. We welcome future opportunities to provide comment and feedback on the various actions outlined in this plan.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Hood', written in a cursive style.

Jessica Hood
Community Advocate Environmental Heritage