

# Brown Hill Community Newsletter

Special Edition, July 2021

*A project of the Brown Hill Progress Association supported by the Brown Hill Community Partnership.*

*We are proud to walk this land with the Wadawurrung people and all other First Nations people.*



*Brown Hill Swimming Pool - View from the Kiosk. Image supplied.*

## Is it time to say farewell?

*Public pools have been the mainstay of communities and generators of an abundance of childhood and family memories. They have been THE place where countless children have learnt to swim – skills for a lifetime. They form a central character of the community they serve.*

Our Brown Hill pool is no different. However, it is reaching an age when the cold-hard facts of the cost involved to keep it maintained and functioning, the cost of major upgrades that are required for the ageing infrastructure and ensuring it is compliant with the ever-growing regulations for health and safety are reaching a point where the City of Ballarat will no longer be able to justify the expense.

**Do you know that our Brown Hill pool is eighty years old? It is a grand age but thirty years over what is considered the life span of a public pool. Page 7 provides some history.**

In 2003 the pool was marked for closure but the efforts of the Brown Hill community won a

reprieve and a volunteer pool sub-committee of the Brown Hill Progress Association (BHPA) has run the pool, in conjunction with the City of Ballarat, since 2006. Over time, patronage numbers and usage of the pool steadily rose and the pool is seen by local families as a community asset with established events in the calendar every season that were well attended.

However, with great reluctance it was decided in March 2020 to return the running of the pool back to the City of Ballarat. The increasing legislative and regulation burden surrounding responsibility as an employer and Occupational Health and Safety compliance were beyond the expertise of our volunteer community members. The potential liability implications were seen to be too onerous to be taken on by community volunteers of a not-for-profit organisation. There has been a reluctance for new BHPA members to come on board with the onerous, time-consuming and

intensive summer activity of running the pool ever present.

However, a big thank you must go to the dozen or so people who have put in thousands of hours over the last 15 years to run and maintain our community pool.

The difficult questions the BHPA is putting forward to the community of Brown Hill – that is, all Brown Hill residents, old and new, are:

***Do you want to retain our pool? If so, are you, personally prepared to work with the BHPA and the City of Ballarat to find ways to not only pay for the major works that are required but also to devise and assist how the pool can be actively managed and maintained into the future?***

Members of the BHPA have thought long and hard on this dilemma and wish to put forward an alternative which we see as helping compensate for the potential loss of a valued community asset:

**A redevelopment of the Brown Hill Reserve as a whole, which would include keeping open the option for the possibility of a new pool being reinstated at some time in the future.**

*This Special Edition outlines the proposal. Please note that it is an initial concept and we welcome your ideas, comments and suggestions. The feedback received will inform the next steps.*

*Brendan Stevens (Secretary) and Hazen Cleary (Member) BHPA*

# Initial Concept: Redevelopment of the Brown Hill Reserve



This initial concept for redeveloping the reserve is in response to the inevitable closure of our ancient pool and enhancing the legacy that it can provide for future Brown Hill generations. The Brown Hill Progress Association (BHPA) sees the best way forward for any post-pool transition is a close working partnership between BHPA (as the community's representative) and the City of Ballarat. This is why we are asking for your feedback and support towards accomplishing a smooth transition from pool to post-pool that will provide ongoing benefits for the whole of the Brown Hill community.

Following are some details concerning the main features of the redevelopment concept. They are initial ideas, illustrated with local examples from around Ballarat. Currently the reserve is under-utilised, which is a shame as it is really such a lovely space in a beautiful setting of mature trees and the backdrop of the Yarrowee River. The suggestions are centred on: achievable; financially modest; within the theme of the existing reserve; in keeping with a small

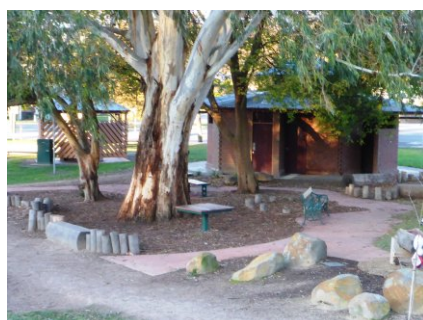
suburban reserve; no bells and whistles; multi-generational and dual usage and low/no maintenance. The best way to achieve a redevelopment is through a staged approach.

*The centre-fold of this edition provides an overview of the reserve redevelopment with location of features indicated with corresponding letters (A), etc.*

## Keeping the Existing Theme of the Reserve

The reserve was gazetted in 1903 so it will be 120 years old in 2023. (Do we hear a celebration coming on?)

The main feature of the reserve, other than its beautiful trees, is the rotunda built by the Brown Hill Hall Committee with Council/Centenary funding in 2001. The additional bar-b-ques



follow the same style of the rotunda. It is proposed to keep this theme throughout the reserve along with complementing its natural setting. This could be similar to what has been achieved at the De Soza Park in Buninyong.

To ensure that the integrity of the reserve is maintained it is being suggested that an overall landscaping project is run in conjunction with the installing of additional features. This could be a hands-on contribution of the BHPA and community members.

## Stage 1: Splash Park Complex

**Location:** Existing Pool site.

**Primary users:** Families with young children.

**Example:** Similar to Creswick splash park.

Free access splash parks are generally open between November and April with water available during daylight hours. In the off-season the above-ground structures are removed leaving a pad of concrete that is used by kids with scooters, for ball games, etc.



### Engineering of design options:

The splash park could be designed so that, at some future time, when available funding may be possible, a new pool could be reinstated. An extension to this option could be that not only a pool could be reinstated but the splash park could also be retained.



**New toilet block (A):** A much-needed facility to replace the old pool toilets and have them accessible for the whole of the reserve. The toilet block, kiosk and shading for the picnic tables would need to be in keeping with the theme of the park which could be accommodated by the addition of a façade similar to the toilet block at De Soza Park in Buninyong.

### Other features of this area:

Climbing frame structures **(B)** for older children, similar to the Creswick splash park. A small basketball hoop area **(C)**, similar to what is already there but updated. This would not only be of use for older children but enhance the area during the off-season. It would complement the established playground at the



other end of the reserve. Also, the installation of a Central Highlands Water (CHW) drinking tap **(D)**.

**To be retained from the existing site:** Bar-b-ques, picnic tables, benches (excess tables/ benches could be relocated throughout the reserve).

## Stage 2: Skate Park

**Primary users:** Older children, teenagers, young adults and maybe older! Beginner and intermediate abilities.

**Example:** Similar to Snake Valley Skate Park.

Preliminary investigations show that a small linear skate park (without a bowl) should fit. The two possible areas are: between the rotunda and the existing playground near the Yarrowee River boundary or closer to Humffray Street North, between the playground and the Hall car park. Preferences are favouring the site closer to the road.

## Permanent Stage (E)

**Primary users:** Local community/school groups wanting to hold an event in the reserve.

Basically, a raised slab of something that is big enough to fit a school choir and has power. Located near the side of the hall to access power which can “talk” to the open area of the reserve.

## Other Potential Features

Terracing around the oval fence line **(F)**, back of the hall where it is steep. This could be in the form of step seating; inclusion of a couple of extra entry gates in oval fencing, reserve side, to allow safer access to oval when not in use.

Near the existing playground, relocate a picnic table **(G)** with permanent shade in keeping with the reserve theme and a nearby CHW drinking tap, permanent shade over the existing playground.

**(H)** Three basic adult exercise stations located around the perimeter of the reserve. This would also create a circuit for those using the Yarrowee River Trail.

**(I)** Strategic solar lighting of the reserve for improved safety and security.

**(J)** Communal garden area

**Primary users:** anyone who likes to dig in the dirt.

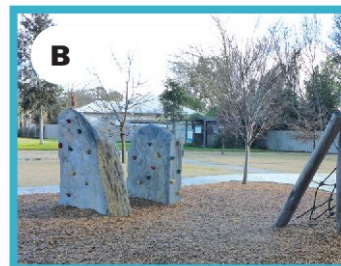
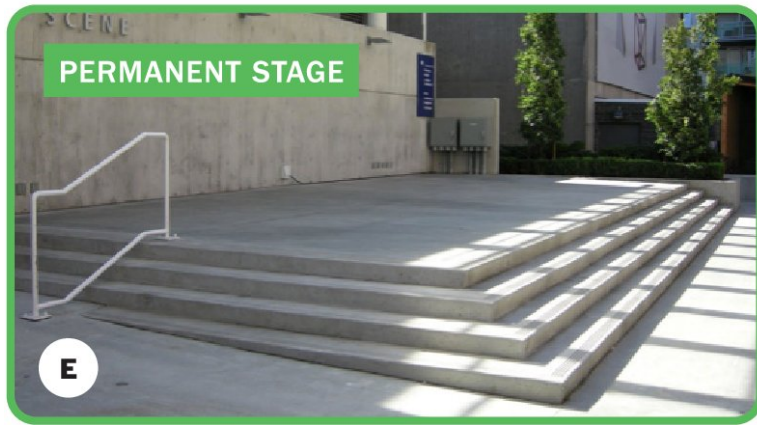
Raised garden beds/seating curving around the path near the fruit trees.

**(K)** Basketball half-court possibly located in the unused corner near the Yarrowee River.

*Note: City of Ballarat Councillors, representing Brown Hill (Central Ward and North Ward) have had an opportunity to do a walk-around of the reserve to understand what is being proposed by the Brown Hill*

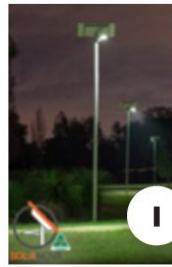


# Redevelopment of Brown Hill Reserve





# Initial Concept July 2021





# Different ways to provide us with your feedback

*The Brown Hill Progress Association (BHPA) welcomes your comments, suggestions and ideas concerning the redevelopment concept for the Reserve.*

*The more residents who actively participate in this feedback phase the more confident the BHPA will be on what the broader Brown Hill community is willing to support.*

*The feedback received and how many residents respond will inform BHPA members on the best way forward. Please encourage your neighbours, friends and family who live in Brown Hill to participate.*

There are several ways to provide feedback:

## Initial Response

The back page of this Special Edition is designed so you can tear it off and write whatever you want concerning your initial response to issues surrounding the pool and/or what is being proposed. If you wish to talk to someone please include your name and a contact number and a BHPA member will get back to you. To return your feedback, place in an envelope addressed to: **The Secretary, Brown Hill Progress Association** and place it in the letterbox at the Brown Hill Hall.

## Community Gathering

The Brown Hill Progress Association intends to hold a community gathering, where a presentation of the situation and redevelopment concept can be discussed as an open forum for residents to have their say.

All community members are



invited to join the BHPA on **Sunday 15 August, 11.30 am - 12.30 pm** (presentation), followed by a free sausage sizzle in the Brown Hill Reserve. In the case of rain, the community gathering will move to the Brown Hill Cricket Clubrooms (Reid Court).

However, with the unpredictability of COVID restrictions, if the event needs to be postponed, we will work to inform as many people as we can through available community networks, social media, notices in shops, etc.

## Online Survey

An online survey has been developed to capture as much feedback as possible. You can access the survey by typing in: [bit.ly/3yE0i4h](https://bit.ly/3yE0i4h) or visiting [brownhill.vic.au/brown-hill-progress-association/](https://brownhill.vic.au/brown-hill-progress-association/)

### Online Survey QR Code



If you would prefer a hard copy of the survey rather than using a computer, either contact the

BHPA on 0408 690 493 (Hazen).

or drop a note into the Hall letterbox and a paper survey will be delivered to you.

When you have completed the survey, place in an envelope, address to **The Secretary, Brown Hill Progress Association** and place it in the letterbox at the Brown Hill Hall.

## Brown Hill Online Community Hub

All information about the proposed redevelopment concept will be available on the Brown Hill online Community Hub: [brownhill.vic.au/brown-hill-progress-association/](https://brownhill.vic.au/brown-hill-progress-association/)

## Contact with Key Community Stakeholder Groups

The BHPA will contact Brown Hill community groups and offer an informal walk-around to discuss the redevelopment concept or to arrange a meeting with members.

## Closing Period for Feedback

The end of August is the final date for receiving feedback so that a report can be compiled which will inform the next step. A report back to residents will be provided shortly after, either by newsletter or get-together or both. Again, this will be dependent on the COVID situation.

The BHPA would like to thank everyone in advance for providing their feedback.

# Brown Hill Pool - always a community concern

Through the years of the early 20th century the closest place to learn to swim for local children was the Yarrowee River. This all changed in 1937 when a deputation of the Brown Hill Progress Association and School Committee met with Councillors to put forward the case that Brown Hill needed a swimming pool and improvements to the Reserve.

A committee was duly formed and soon local identities formed a group to build a swimming pool in Humffray Street North, which entailed a lot of backbreaking work for the community in digging out the pool. Sustenance work was used to help create the pool – this was work provided by men unemployed during the depression years of the 1930s. The Victorian Gazette shows that the land for the pool was added to the reserve at Brown Hill in 1938.

In August 1939 the Secretary of the Swimming Committee wrote to the Council asking when work was commencing, writing again on 29 November. A quick reply ensued, “This work was started on 28 November 1939 and will be carried out as far as possible by sustenance labour as already agreed and arranged.” The Brown Hill Pool had at last started.

The official opening of the pool was on Saturday, 18 January 1941. The opening was written up in the Ballarat Courier, “...a fully concreted pool constructed on the very latest designs, one of the few pools in Ballarat with a surfaced bottom.” The pool had open access and no fencing, plus no admittance fee, with voluntary labour to maintain the facility. It was a very popular amenity for



Historic photo of young people enjoying the Brown Hill Pool with the Brown Hill Hall in the background. Source: Victoria Collections.

the area, providing children with a pool to learn to swim plus a great area for the community as a family venue as well. The pool is a tribute to the work put in by the Brown Hill community to obtain a much-needed sporting venue for the area. In 1942 the Americans on R & R leave in Ballarat used this area for any soldier who had been reported for misdemeanours and they had to march around the pool, much to the delight of the children. At this stage in Ballarat there existed the City Baths at the corner of Armstrong and Market Streets and the Eastern Baths in Eastwood Street.

The pool was written up in the Australian Municipal Association Journal and in February 1941 the Council received a letter from the Town Hall at Southern Cross in WA, asking if they could use the plans and specifications. In 1959 a filtration and chlorination plant were installed. In 1963 Council met the cost of fencing-in the pool.

Swimming at the pool had been free until the pool was fenced off.

For twenty-odd years the children and community of Brown Hill and surrounds had the facilities and swimming pool, giving them hours of free entertainment. The pool continued being a valued part of the community up until 2003, when the pool was marked for closure...

With thanks, text taken from manuscript “Sport & Recreation, and Swimming Committee” by Margaret McKenna 2005

**We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people and their ancestors who have been custodians of the Ballarat area for thousands of years performing age-old cultural ceremonies, celebrations and traditions.**

**We would like to acknowledge the Ballarat Aboriginal community, many of whom were forcibly removed from their families during the Stolen Generations decades and brought to Ballarat.**

**We would also like to acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.**

# Brown Hill Residents: Initial feedback

*What would you like to say?*

If you would like to talk to someone, please include:

**Name and contact details:**

To return your feedback, place this form in an envelope addressed to: **The Secretary, Brown Hill Progress Association and place it in the letterbox at the Brown Hill Hall.**

If you wish to email your initial feedback, contact the Brown Hill Progress Association via **bhpa@brownhill.vic.au (Attention: BH Reserve)**

## About our Newsletter

This publication is a community project of the Brown Hill Progress Association. This is a Special Edition.

**Guest Editors:** Hazen Cleary and Brendan Stevens, Brown Hill Progress Association.

The views expressed or information provided in this publication are not necessarily those of the Brown Hill Community Newsletter Committee, including any officers, members, agents or contractors.

Printed by Ballarat Mailworks on 100% recycled paper.

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ISSN 2209-9050

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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION of VICTORIA

the voice of the community

**MEMBER 2021**