

Department of Jobs,
Precincts and Regions

Engagement Report

**Footscray Opportunity and
Directions Paper**

25 March 2022

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	3
Introduction	4
Purpose.....	4
Engagement.....	4
Feedback	5
Footscray Opportunity and Directions Paper Survey overview	6
Next steps.....	9

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of lands and waterways within the City of Maribyrnong being the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise and are committed to protecting the continuing and traditional connection of both the Bunurong and Wurundjeri Traditional Owners and further acknowledge their contribution in the carrying and nurturing of the lands, waterways and resources of their country.

Introduction

The Victorian Government is investing significantly in multiple projects that will continue to shape the future of Footscray, these projects include, the new Footscray Hospital, the Footscray Learning Precinct, Melbourne Metro Tunnel and the Melbourne Airport Rail Link. To leverage this investment, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) developed the [Footscray Opportunity and Directions Paper \(FODP\)](#). This paper highlights the economic, land use, transport, social, creative, and sustainable opportunities that will drive future investment and activity in Footscray.

The Victorian Government has welcomed and incorporated key stakeholder comments, feedback and engagement on the working vision, goals and high-level opportunities presented in the draft iteration of the FODP.

DJPR has engaged with a range of stakeholders including community groups, businesses associations, health and education sectors and across local and state government departments to ensure the FODP presented an aligned and coordinated vision for the future of Footscray. To support this, DJPR developed a stakeholder survey that asked for formalised feedback. This feedback was then incorporated into the final version of the FODP.

Purpose

The purpose of the FODP is to develop a vision for Footscray that respects the needs and wants of those who live, work, and play in Footscray.

Engagement

To ensure any future investment and projects are coordinated, DJPR established a Working Group which included a range of stakeholders. The coordination group included state and local government, various transport, health and education agencies as well as local-based advocacy and trader associations.

The Working Group met monthly, shared and discussed ongoing projects and events and worked collaboratively to provide a coordinated outlook on the future direction of Footscray. This coordination group was used to guide the development of the FODP, as well discuss other issues such as the development of the new hospital site, the existing hospital site and other on-going projects in Footscray.

When the draft FODP was developed, DJPR established one-on-one meetings with individual stakeholders to gather feedback. This feedback was then incorporated into the final iteration of the FODP document.

Further to this, DJPR promoted an online survey utilising SurveyMonkey to target students, education leaders, various business owners and local and state government stakeholders with a connection to Footscray. This survey was developed to refine the Business Precincts' vision for Footscray and to guide the outcomes of the FODP.

Feedback

Feedback for the Footscray Business Precinct was received through online correspondence and surveys, meetings, and workshops.

Consistent themes were received in the feedback, including:

Table 1:

1	The need for safe and inclusive active transport connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholders raised concerns about unsafe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in and around Footscray. • Key areas of concern being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Geelong Road and Barkly Street intersection – many children use this intersection as it is located between Footscray Primary School and Footscray High School (Barkly Campus), this intersection is perceived as large, unsafe and does not give enough priority to bicycle riders and pedestrians. ○ Napier Street, Moore Street and Dynon Road – these corridors are perceived as having an unpleasant environment for pedestrians and bicycle riders due to the high volume of trucks and cars.
2	Increased tree coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feedback highlighted that the lack of trees and urban heat island effect can influence how people interact with the Footscray Business Precinct, this was noted as prominent in the north-western sections of Footscray, particularly around the existing hospital site.
3	Increased open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholders have highlighted the need for more open space within the Footscray Business Precinct, especially with the significant growth in apartments and townhouses.
4	Interest in the future use of the existing hospital site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholders have expressed an interest in the future policy and land-use opportunities for the existing hospital site after it is superseded by the new hospital in 2025. • Opportunities for future creative industries, affordable housing, open space and sports and recreation facilities.
5	Interest in the land use around the future hospital site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest has been raised on the future built form and zoning along Droop Street, Tiernan Street, Federal Street and Ballarat Road. • The need for key working housing and zoning that enables allied health facilities to move near the future hospital site.
6	Uniquely Footscray solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback addressing the gritty character of Footscray was mixed. There was a mix of responses, with some highlighting that the gritty character adds to what makes Footscray special, and others stating that it can make the area feel unsafe and unclean. • Much of the feedback highlighted the need for any significant policy or infrastructure changes to respect the local community, culture and history of Footscray.

Footscray Opportunity and Directions Paper survey overview

Key takeaway

This survey and DJPR's continued engagement relating to the Footscray Business Precinct has highlighted how important culture is to those who work, live, and visit in and around Footscray. Many stakeholders and community members that were engaged, have a strong perception that without considerate social and community inclusion and planning, what has historically made Footscray special could be lost.

Overview

The survey covered various topics relating to the future of Footscray, including: objectives, strengths, challenges and opportunities.

Positive attributes

The findings of this report highlighted that the respondents found Footscray to be well serviced by public transport and a place with a vibrant and diverse community.

Challenges for Footscray

Many stated that the changing face of Footscray is a major challenge and that there is a need to provide affordable housing and local jobs, to ensure that Footscray can remain an accepting culturally and linguistically diverse community and destination.

The challenges raised that hinder success for Footscray were safety, post-covid recovery and jobs.

The responses highlighted the need for better use of vacant spaces, easily accessible public spaces and the need for more jobs.

More than half of the responses stated Footscray needs a better mix of the following:

- cultural institutions
- creative industries
- health and wellbeing services
- retail and supermarkets
- restaurants
- bars
- personal and business services
- industry-based jobs to help the precinct recover and prosper.

Existing Footscray Hospital

Many stakeholders expressed curiosity and interest in the future of the existing hospital site at 90 Gordon Street, Footscray. The hospital will be decommissioned in 2025, when Western Health moves to the new hospital site on Geelong and Ballarat Roads.

The existing Footscray Hospital site is currently owned and managed by the Department of Health and Western Health. Early site investigations are currently underway to determine site suitability for land use transition.

The future use of this site post hospital relocation is currently unknown.

There was a strong interest in the former psychiatric building, which is a heritage listed brutalist building with a unique style of architecture.

The Footscray Opportunity and Directions Paper Survey questioned the respondents about what they would like to see on the existing hospital site, when Western Health vacates.

Respondents highlighted the need for the following:

- open space
- community infrastructure and services
- sports and recreation facilities
- trees and landscaping
- small businesses that provide local jobs
- shops, food, and entertainment.

Future Footscray Hospital

The new hospital site is on the corner of Geelong and Ballarat Roads in Footscray. This new hospital will be integrated with the local community, providing new shops and services and will be connected directly with Victoria University. The new hospital will cut wait times and reduce pressure on nearby hospitals, providing 200 more beds, treating approximately 15,000 additional patients and enable 20,000 additional people to be seen by the emergency department each year. The new hospital is currently under construction and due to be completed in 2025.

Visit the [Victorian Health Building Authority website](#) for more information on the new Footscray Hospital.

For the new hospital site, due to open in 2025, more than half of the respondents told us the following was needed to create a new mixed-use neighbourhood:

- the creation of new public spaces
- upgrading lighting and streetscapes
- improving public transport services
- increased amenity
- improved pedestrian links between the university and the new hospital.

The future of Footscray

We asked how we keep Footscray's unique identity and diverse culture strong into the future. Respondents highlighted the need to:

- retain the eclectic land use mix
- support the supply of affordable and social housing
- collaborate with local creatives, artists and the community
- support community-based organisations
- safeguard the iconic parts of Footscray's history, including its Indigenous history, diversity, visual style and culture.

Filling in the gap

We asked an open-ended question: "What do you think is missing in the Footscray Opportunity and Directions Paper?". Respondents stated that they would like to see more emphasis on safety, development and the urban realm of Footscray CBD. More consideration for future uses of the existing hospital site, need for more commerce and retail, demographic considerations, emphasising Footscray as a 'university town' and a more ambitious way to define the hospital and university precinct.

What community groups, associations and businesses are doing for Footscray

Feedback from the diverse ranges of stakeholders involved was that organisations, associations and businesses in Footscray are well connected to the overall community and that it is important that we continue to engage and work together moving forward.

When asked the open-ended question "What is your organisation doing now, or in the short term to foster opportunity and diversity and will help make Footscray the heart of creativity and enterprise in Melbourne's inner west?" we received a diverse range of responses.

These included:

- Offering inclusive education
- Running not for profit associations that support those in need
- Encouraging active lifestyles
- Supporting women and children in need
- Helping students find jobs
- Planning for the Vietnamese Museum of Australia
- Supporting social enterprise and community spaces
- Promoting active healthier transport
- Promoting more jobs
- Selling products and actively marketing Footscray as a destination via #lovefootscray.

Next steps

DJPR's continued engagement relating to the Footscray Business Precinct has highlighted how important the culture of Footscray is to those who work, live, and visit.

Many stakeholders and community members, have a strong perception that without considerate social and community inclusion and planning, there is risk that what historically made Footscray special could be lost.

All stakeholder engagement and feedback will be used to determine the outcomes of the Footscray Precinct Roadmap which is due to be released in 2022. The Footscray Precinct Roadmap will be developed with a whole of government approach, bringing together economic, land use, transport social and sustainability objectives, and will coordinate future investment and activity.

Over the next 12 months, we will work with key stakeholders to deliver local projects and programs that enliven public spaces and bring further benefits to the community. We will continue to engage with the local residents and business communities to ensure that the voices of Footscray are considered and guide business precinct outcomes.