

MURRINDINDI SHIRE COUNCIL

U.T.CREEK ENHANCEMENT

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP

U.T.CREEK RESERVE 2005

MASTER PLAN

REVIEW OF THE “HAMMOND”
MASTER PLAN OF 1983

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AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF THE RESERVE



UT CREEK CONCEPT PLAN FROM HAMMOND REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. BACKGROUND & HISTORY

The U.T Creek Enhancement Community Support Group was formed in October 2001. This Committee is a Section 86 Special Committee of the Murrindindi Shire Council.

The Group was established at a public meeting in February 2001, following a submission to Council to form the group from the Rotary Club of Alexandra. The Group comprises most of the major community organisations of Alexandra.

The aims of the Group as established in their Charter included
 -to update the 1983 *Hammond Plan* to include current issues.
 -to oversee the implementation of the Recommendations from the updated Report
 -to undertake the enhancement of the Creek Bed & Banks.

The *Hammond Plan 1983* recommended that the UT Creek Reserve had the potential to become the “ Heart of Alexandra“. The Group has used this report as a reference document for a revised Master Plan.

2. THE NEED FOR A MASTER PLAN

The U T Creek Reserve has great potential, combined with other local attractions such as Mc Kenzie Flora Reserve , the Goulburn River, the Timber Tramway Museum , the proposed Rail Trail, Josephine Cutting Lookout, etc, to give Alexandra a facility which could attract and keep tourists in the town. The late Jack Shiel, whose memory is retained by the Gardens named after him, reminded us that we could emulate Towns , such as Bright, Grafton in NSW, Bowral etc.

3. THE REVISED MASTER PLAN

The Group has accepted Hammond`s Objectives and endorses his Plan as an excellent one for the time. But as we point out , Alexandra has changed substantially in the 21 years since 1983 and we have produced a Revised Report.

THEREFORE , our Recommendations are set out on Pages 15 to 35 and the following Attachments :

Areas to be included in the Reserve

The Reserve is broadly the Public Purposes Recreation Zone [PPRZ] from Station Street to Halls Road. The Plan also notes the desirability of future Extension of the Reserve to the Goulburn River and elsewhere.

Focus of Interest nodes.

The importance of future connections [walking/cycling tracks] to the other attractions of Alexandra- listed above , is emphasised.

Overall Concept of Function and Use

A Statement of Principles is given in Para 3.2 and is summarised in the next two sections below:

Use of the reserve

- Passive recreation which could include walking and cycling tracks, picnics, family recreation.
- Approved and existing sporting and recreational activities.
- Additional activities of the same type recommended by the group and approved by Council.

Development Aspects & Controls

- The bed and banks of UT Creek should be regenerated as a natural system, by removal of introduced and non-indigenous trees , shrubs and weeds and replacement with original local indigenous species.
- Such regeneration should enable the Creek to continue as a wild life corridor through the town, while still allowing access to the Creek where possible.
- Erosion control and water quality improvements are the role of Council and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. Revegetation should follow major works.
- The Reserve will be largely open green space , interspersed with trees and shrubs [a mixture of introduced and native species as at present – to preserve Alexandra `s rich heritage of planting]. Formal garden settings will only be in Rotary Park, Jack Shiel Gardens and Paynes Avenue.
- Walking and cycling tracks will be developed. These will be edged at ground level to facilitate mowing, the colour of the surface to be as natural as possible, crushed rock surface , bitumen only if funds permit.
- Parking should be provided at each sporting or recreational venue of a type and with numbers of spaces to be determined with the venue and Council.
- Signage should be provide to all features in the park and nearby.
- Seating , rubbish bins and toilets should be provided at appropriate locations.

Activity Zones within the UT Creek Reserve

ZONE 1 U.T.Creek Bed & Banks [Station Street to Halls Rd , the Community Leisure Centre].

ZONE 2 – Active Recreation Zone

ZONE 3 –Formal Gardens and War Memorial

ZONE 4 –Rotary Park [including the Visitor Information Centre and playground]

ZONE 5 – Urban Woodland

ZONE 6 – Passive Recreation

Recommended Development Controls are provided for these Zones.

Trees in the Reserve

A Survey has been conducted of existing trees and from this a Register of significant trees is proposed. A Policy has been developed with Council Officers which provides species of Trees for replacement and additional Planting in the Reserve.

Walking and Cycling Tracks

Location and Specifications are provided in attachments 7 & 8. Priority for new tracks is proposed to commence west of Rotary Park Playground.

Other Recommendations

- That the unmade unofficial Extension to Vickery Street be closed as a road and that present usage of Green Street be reviewed.
- That the two Council properties on the Station Street/Vickery Street Corner are included in the U.T.Creek reserve.
- That any proposal to open the end of Albert Street Extension to Bayley Street is opposed by the group.
- That the properties on the corner of Paynes Avenue and Grant Street are acquired in order to open up Leckie Park and Dove Cottage from Grant Street.
- A sign *To Leckie Park* is placed at the corner of Paynes Avenue and Grant Street.
- That Council should acquire any of the four properties adjoining Rotary Park [in Vickery Street] should any of these come on the market.
- That relationships with users of the reserve are reviewed and existing agreements clarified.
- That parking areas within the reserve are reviewed and that vehicles should be restricted to roads and designated parking areas and generally be excluded from grassed areas.
- That Council endorse the group's policy to seek individuals or groups in the role of *adopting* sections of the creek bank to weed, remove unwanted species and replant , to support the work of the Council and GBCMA.
- That Grant Street , between Vickery and Downey Streets, is declared a Heritage Area.
- That Council consider a Committee of Management for Rotary Park as suggested.
- That implementation of the Master Plan is the responsibility of Council and its officers.
- That the role of the UT Creek Group in the implementation of the plan is as an advisory body to council officers involved and as a 'watchdog' to monitor the progress.
- That Council seek funding to support the implementation of the Master Plan and increased ongoing maintenance which will result.
- That a 'UT Creek Bed & Banks Sub-Committee' is maintained by the Group.

4. HISTORY OF THE RESERVE

is reviewed.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORT

is discussed.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

are made

SUMMARY

In summary, the UT Creek Group submits a Master Plan for the UT Creek Reserve, which , in our opinion, provides a framework of controls and proposals for future development.

Within this framework, the various bodies which control areas of the Reserve-[a Rotary Park Committee of Management or a Bowling Club etc.] are able to manage and develop their own area , adding whatever detail they wish , provided they remain within the framework actually approved by the Shire Council , based on this Plan.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION—THE SUPPORT GROUP

1.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUPPORT GROUP

The Group was established as a Section 86 Special Committee of the Murrindindi Shire Council on the 11th October 2001, as a result of a Submission from the Rotary Club of Alexandra. The Rotary Club referred to the need for enhancement of the U.T.Creek and its banks, the further need to review and upgrade the Master Plan prepared by Richard Hammond in 1983 and once adopted, to oversee the Master Plan's implementation. It was also proposed that Council call an Open Meeting of all of the community organisations in Alexandra to consider these proposals and establish an appropriate organisation.

This Open Meeting was held on 13th February 2001 and a Group of organisations [including the Rotary Club, Tourist & Traders Association, Timber Tramway Museum, Lions Club of Alexandra, the Shire [Councillor Matthews], Tennis Club, G.B.Catchment Management Authority, D.N.R.E, Upper Goulburn Field Naturalists] met on 26th March 2001 and recommended the establishment of this Group.

As indicated, the Group was finally established in October 2001,[as a Section 86 Committee of Council] with a Committee structure of: Not less than 5 Members, representing community organisations of Alexandra plus 3 community representatives.

The initial Committee was:

-Chairperson	Maurice Pawsey-Rotary Club of Alexandra
-Secretary	David Lamprell-Timber &Tramway Museum
-Treasurer	June Gunn-Community
-Members	Councillor Graeme Matthews-Shire
	Steve Smith-D.N.R.E.
	Robert Chaffe –DNRE & Rotary Club of Alexandra
	Wendy Williams-Tourist & Traders Assoc.
	Lorraine Pyke-Field Naturalists
	Joan Edwards-Field Naturalists
	Gerry Gibson-Tennis Club
-Observer	Keith Yates-G.B.C.M.A.

Deed of Delegation

The OBJECTS of the Group as set out in the Deed of Delegation are:

[a] to act as an advisory and liaison body between Council and the local community, individuals, clubs and organisations who/which may use the facilities of the Reserve;

[b] to advise Council in relation to the general development of the Reserve and such adjoining areas as may bear on the future of the Reserve;

[c] encourage public interest and support for the development and management of the Reserve;

[d] To advise Council on the updating and future development of the existing Master Plan –“U.T.Creek- A Development Concept Plan “, Richard Hammond 1983 and any future Master Plans for the same purpose;

[e] To liaise with the Department of Natural Resources and other relevant catchment authorities and organise and oversee the re-vegetation of U.T. Creek;

[f] in co-operation with Council to organise and oversee the establishment of walking/cycling tracks, signs, fences, shrubs and trees and other landscaping features in the subject area.

MEMBERSHIP

Since the Initial appointments, Membership has changed and Membership at time of the Report is :

-Chairperson	Maurice Pawsey –Rotary Club of Alexandra
-Secretary/Treasurer	David Lamprell- Timber & Tramway Museum
-Members	Councillor Mike Dalmau-Shire
	Wendy Williams-Tourist & Traders Association
	Joan Edwards-Field Naturalists
	Lorraine Pyke-Field Naturalists
	Graham Page –Community & Field Naturalists
	Chris Petersen- Lions Club of Alexandra
	Robert Chaffe-D.S.E. & Rotary Club of Alexandra
	Janette Currie- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.
	Jerry Woinarski -Community
OBSERVERS	Bob Flowers- Rotary Club of Alexandra
	Bronwyn Leary-Youth Project

1.2 PROGRESS

The Group accepts the three major roles, embodied in the Council’s charge and progress has been:

-Upgrade of the Beds and Banks of U.T.Creek

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has been working in the Creek, above and below Rotary Park, over the last three or four years. Their work has involved erosion control and removal of introduced trees and major weeds [willows ,blackberries etc]. Initially mostly in the west end of the Reserve, near Rose Street and the Leisure Centre. A major project was executed in 2003, followed by some revegetation work, assisted by the Alexandra Primary School. The necessary follow up work to remove weeds etc , remains a problem, although in late 2004 , good regrowth is obvious.

In 2004 , work has concentrated on the Creek above Grant Street , to Station Street. The major Willows were poisoned , together with Blackberries and other major weeds. Removal of the Willows commenced in December and will continue in 2005. Revegetation commenced before Christmas 2004 [GBCMA providing the Trees and staff , assisted by U.T.Creek Group Members doing the planting.] This is expected to continue in 2005.

To follow on this work , the Enhancement Group has accepted a shared role with the Shire and the G.B.C.M.A. , of removing and controlling Weeds and the role of removing unwanted imported shrubs and trees and replacing these with indigenous species. The Beds and Banks Works Sub-Committee [chaired by Stephen Smith until 2004] has prepared an attractive Brochure “ U.T.Creek Vegetation Restoration Project “ which invites groups and individuals to “ adopt “ a section of the Creek, weeding and planting. This has received a reasonable response, with six/seven groups [inc Rotary and Guides] and individuals accepting the challenge –see Attachment 9. A Parks Victoria Grant of \$ 1500 was obtained in 2001-through the Rotary Club and Stephen Smith and was spent in the Planting Season of 2002/3 as soon as rains began, on Plants , tools and chemicals. A further Grant of \$ 9054 was obtained from the Federal Government’s –National Heritage Trust-Enviro Fund, in 2004, for further weed eradication, protective fencing and planting. This has resulted in more spraying of blackberries and weeds , fencing is being installed and some 4000 plants will be planted in Autumn 2005. It can truly be said that the transformation of the Creek Banks has commenced.

There is some controversy over the best method of restoring the Creek with several critics –inside and outside the Group- challenging the slow nature of progress and looking for different outcomes. The critics appear to have no viable alternative , given the little likelihood of the Shire or the CMA taking on any upgrading process or providing significant resources, beyond their current roles, although we recognise the significant efforts of the CMA in recent years. In relation to the removal of exotic and unwanted plants & weeds, the Group accepts there is no alternative , but to continue to seek groups or individuals who will adopt a section and work on it , on a long term basis, noting that the G.B.C.M.A. has also , we understand , accepted a long term role in the removal of weeds and non-indigenous species. Refer to Para 3.14 of the Report for a more detailed analysis.

This Project is likely to be on-going , with groups accepting a caretaker role over the Creek Banks.

The group participated in National Tree Day in 2001 and also in 2002.

1.3 MASTER PLAN REVIEW

Contact has been made with all of the users of the Reserve on their perceived needs and a Public Meeting was held in March 2002 , to seek input from the Alexandra Public. Regular articles have appeared in the Alexandra Standard.

The Group is working on many aspects of the 1983 Plan and several working parties are investigating these issues. Early 2005 is the target date for a Draft Report. The Group has already formally advised the Shire that it will have views on major aspects , including a Heritage Zone in Grant Street, support for the purchase of the Library Land, Parking in and around the Reserve, closure of an informal extension to Vickery Street and the need to review all Titles and Zonings within the U.T. Creek Reserve. Partly in response to our request , land in Perkins Street has been Rezoned from PPRZ to Residential.

-the third task is the implementation of the revised Master Plan and seeking of Grants to commence Works. Clearly the completion of the Report is the precursor to this Task. See Chapter V “ Implementation of the Report”.

1.4 THE “HAMMOND” MASTER PLAN

The Group has already decided that it’s Report will Review but not include the 1983 “Hammond “ Report and that its Report will then submit recommendations for upgrade, extensions or changes. We will not be rewriting the “Hammond” Report, which was an excellent Report for conditions of that time. Therefore , this Report will be an update of the “ Hammond “ Report, but will stand alone as a Master Plan for the extended U.T.Creek Reserve. We are not attaching the “ Hammond “ Report, but can make photocopies available if needed .

1.5 THE EXTENT OF THE AREA UNDER REVIEW

Pending a review of the Titles and Zoning of the Reserve-the Group’s Rules set the Reserve as “ all the land and banks of the U.T.Creek bounded by Station Street, Perkins Street, Vickery Street and Grant Street-which is NOT privately owned AND West of Grant Street, the banks and reserves of U.T. Creek enclosed by the boundaries of adjoining private property, to the Goulburn River”.

The immediate area of interest for this Report is the current Public Purposes Recreation Zone from Station Street to Halls Road.

The Group declared an interest in the landscaping of the Hec Ingram reserve-the Youth Precinct. Also the need to review and investigate links to the Timber Tramway Museum, existing water courses such as the Rose Street Creek, the Wattle Creek development, the proposed Railtrail to Seymour/Tallarook, McKenzie Reserve and the adjoining Alexandra Bushland Reserve , any other similar reserves the immediate vicinity of the township of Alexandra.

1.6 OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

The Group has also declared an interest in proposing that a Heritage area be established in the area of Grant Street , between Vickery and Downey Streets and also will recommend on purchase of several key pieces of land. The Group has

supported the purchase of the land for the Alexandra Library and also helped with the development of an application for funds for the Library Extension. More recently in advice and comment on landscaping between the Library Extension and the Creek.

1.7 MANAGEMENT OF THE RESERVE & ONGOING ROLE OF THE GROUP

It is essential to clarify the U.T.Creek Group's position in relation to management of the Reserve. The ultimate responsibility for this Reserve lies in the Department of Sustainability & Environment and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. But the Shire of Murrindindi is the delegated Manager of the Reserve, with the U.T.Creek Enhancement Group [as a Special Committee of Council] having specific tasks. These tasks at present are established as : -Preparation of an updated Master Plan for the Reserve , between Station Street and Halls Road.

-Implementation of the Master Plan

-Enhancement of the Creek Bed & Banks

It is clear to this Group , that our Role is not fully understood by Council staff. We are not a Committee of Management and as presently constituted , cannot fulfil that role. As a Group charged with the duty to prepare an updated Master Plan, we have found information exchange with Council staff difficult and it is essential that early discussions on our long term role are held.

In the Chapter V- IMPLEMENTATION , we have included some recommendations.

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF THE “HAMMOND “ MASTER PLAN

2.1 FORMAT

We do not propose to attach the “Hammond” Report – but this is our reference document to this report. Where appropriate we will restate his recommendations, with our amendments.

We see this as a stand alone master plan report, because of the very extensive changes in condition since the 1983 Report. But we acknowledge with thanks the excellent work of Richard Hammond and it is a pity that his plan was not implemented.

2.2 INTRODUCTION TO HAMMOND’S REPORT

Twenty years on from Richard Hammond’s Report , we have little argument with his general views, particularly with the statement that the U.T.Creek Reserve should become the “Heart of Alexandra”. Our task is to bring the Report up-to-date and to extend its scope, to recognise the growth and development of the Town.

It is noted that none of Hammond’s proposals have been activated and there has been no further consideration of his development ideas, although Council is reported [in September 1992] to have endorsed the Plan, as quoted in the “Standard “- “ Council still supports the development concepts outlined in the Richard Hammond 1982/83 Report on U.T.Creek and will continue to implement its recommendations in future years as time and funding permits “ and “ that the development concepts outlined in the report should be applied to that area of the reserve west of Bayley Street “. The Council consideration in September 1992 noted that “ the 1983 Plan stopped at Rotary Park. The community need to decide whether that Plan is still relevant and whether it warrants extension to the Leisure Centre”.

We are not aware of any further discussion of this issue and certainly Kevin Bootee’s proposal of a walking trail along U.T.Creek to the Community and Leisure Centre was never followed. Several Rotary Club proposals of a similar nature have also failed , because of lack of funding and a current Plan.

The twelve Objectives set out by Hammond are still relevant and give this Group a quite satisfactory basis to review the “Hammond” Report.

We need to consider what major changes and developments have occurred since 1982/83. These are not major , in fact surprisingly little has changed in twenty years in the Reserve :

-Rotary Park has gained a second Barbecue Shelter and very recently by a decision [controversial to some] to build a Visitor Information Centre in the Park-linked to the Toilet Block. It should be remembered that Hammond saw this a suitable location for the Visitor Centre.

-land adjacent to the Alexandra Library and the Creek has been purchased as the result of a Community effort, led by the Alexandra Rotary Club and Friends of the Alexandra Library and in conjunction with the Shire Council. In view of the proximity to the Reserve, its development for a Library Extension and Community Cultural facilities is integral with the U.T.Creek Reserve development.

-the Jack Shiel Gardens and Paynes Avenue Gardens , on both sides of the Creek, have been established opposite the rebuilt Council Offices.

-Paynes Avenue has been closed at its junction with Grant Street.

-the Tennis and Bowls Clubs have improved and extended their facilities, but the Cricket ground and Swimming Pool are little changed [we note a major redevelopment is proposed for 2005]

-the Timber and Tramway Museum is now a significant focus of activity and must be addressed in the Master Plan and may , in future become part of the Rail trail to Tallarook.

-The Community and Leisure Centre is now a focus and would be a significant reason on its own , to extend the Reserve and extent of the Master Plan.

-Jeff Kennett came and departed in the period , but one of his actions saw the amalgamation of the Shires of Alexandra and Yea plus Kinglake , into the Shire of Murrindindi. There are now 5 significant towns and a number of smaller townships, calling on less resources to maintain and operate them.

It is clearly time the Master Plan was reviewed , the detailed work referred to by Hammond executed and implementation commenced. This exercise may fall into several Stages, but this Group is determined that enhancement of the U.T.Creek Reserve must commence.

2.3 OBJECTIVES

HAMMOND'S Objectives were :

1. To feature UT Creek and to make it the major focal element in the Park.
2. To identify special activity and interest focus points both within and outside the Park .
3. To return the public open space to the pedestrian.
4. To provide social, recreational and educational activities to suit most members of the community, but...

5. To recognize that all uses can't be provided everywhere for everyone so let's not worry about it.
6. To recognize potential conflicts between uses and users and avoid problems by separating conflicting uses into activity zones.
7. To define and separate pedestrian vehicular spaces.
8. To provide for a "greening" of UT Creek Park with vegetation designed to screen, shade, feature, educate and define.
9. To provide a lighted network of paths and trails within the Park to link residential, commercial and recreational areas of the community.
10. To recognize and enhance important historical structures and usage patterns of the park and community.
11. To screen undesirable views and enhance positive ones, and finally,
12. To tie the entire public space into a functional and visual whole which complements adjacent commercial and residential land uses.

In 2004 these Objectives remain acceptable to us and become our OBJECTIVES

2.4 ACTIVITY ZONES

Hammond established **SIX** Zones :

Zone 1	Visitor Centre	Now Rotary Park & Playground
Zone 2.	Passive Recreation	Now Paynes Ave & Bowling Club
Zone 3	Active Recreation	Now Leckie Park, Cricket Ground Tennis Club, Swimming Pool
Zone 4	Forest Education	Area adjacent to U.T.Creek [south side] In Perkins Street
Zone 5	Semi-Formal Garden	Now Jack Shiel Gardens, CWA Rooms & Library
Zone 6	UT Creek	

The New Master Plan proposes different Zones –See Para 3.3 –Page 17.

CHAPTER 3- THE REVISED MASTER PLAN

As indicated in Chapter 2, The Support Group broadly agrees with the “ thrust “ and recommendations of the “ Hammond “ Report of 1983 and accepts Hammond’s OBJECTIVES . Our intention is to produce a new Report which updates the “ Hammond “ Recommendations, to reflect the changes which have taken place in Alexandra and to extend the area of the Report , along the Creek to the Community Leisure Centre at Halls Road.

3.1 SCOPE OF RESERVE AND ZONES OF ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION I

The UT Creek Group recommends that:

The U.T.Creek Reserve should include:

-All of the land enclosed by Station Street to the East, Perkins Street to the South, Vickery Street and Paynes Avenue to the North and Grant Street to the West [**EXCLUDING** the Residential and Commercial properties in Private ownership on the North Side of Perkins Street and the CWA Rooms and the Public Library]

This is basically the existing Public Purposes Recreation Zone East of Grant Street- less certain properties along the north side of Perkins Street –which were removed from the PPRZ in 2004 . These Properties have become Residential.

-Rotary Park & All of the Crown Land on both sides of U.T. Creek from Grant Street South to Halls Road. Presently the Public Purposes and Recreation [PPRZ] Zone between Grant Street and Halls Rd.

SEE ATTACHMENT 1

NOTE

AT SOME APPROPRIATE TIME IN THE FUTURE- CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO EXTENDING THE RESERVE TO INCLUDE THE CROWN LAND SURROUNDING THE U.T.CREEK , TO ITS JUNCTION WITH THE GOULBURN RIVER. ALSO BY APPROPRIATE CONNECTIONS VIA THE ”ROSE STREET” CREEK AND “WATTLE CREEK” TO MCKENZIE FLORA RESERVE and the ADJOINING - ALEXANDRA BUSHLAND RESERVE. ALSO IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXTEND THE RESERVE ALONG THE U.T.CREEK EAST OF STATION STREET.

ENVIRONMENT

In making its recommendations the Group sees a number of major “ Focus of Interest “ nodes to be considered. These include:

- The Tourist and Tramway Museum and the proposed Rail Trail from Tallarook.
- The Walking Track established by the Hospital & Lions for Health Week from Rotary Park over Josephine Cutting to Swann Rd etc.
- the Grant Street Extension to Josephine Cutting Lookout.
- Leckie Park and its facilities.
- Rotary Park/ the Grant Street Historic Precinct/Town Centre/ Youth Precinct
- the Community and Leisure Centre/Secondary College
- McKenzie Flora Reserve and the Alexandra Bushland Reserve associated. Also the potential connections to this Reserve via Wattle Creek and Rose St Creek.
- the Goulburn River.

3.2 OVERALL CONCEPT OF FUNCTION & USE – Attachment 1 - Map

The Group believes that the following Statement of Concept Principles spells out its concept for Function and Use of the Reserve.

3.2.1 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

-The primary use of the Reserve should be Passive Recreation, PLUS approved and existing sporting and recreational activities, plus any limited additional similar activities approved by the Group and the Shire in the future. PASSIVE RECREATION could include walking and cycling tracks, picnics , family recreation , but not organised sport , except as approved in defined areas.

-The Bed and Banks of the U.T. Creek should be retained as a natural system [see introduction in Para 1.2 & Para 3.14 of this Report] , by removal of introduced and non-indigenous trees, shrubs and weeds and replacement with original local indigenous species. The Creek should continue as a wild life corridor through the Town, with appropriate planting to facilitate that situation. This planting should be continuous enough for wild life corridor purposes, but must allow adequate access for residents , to the Creek and to preserve vistas. The achievement of these conditions, in the opinion of the Group, will only be possible by long

term , hand tool operations by dedicated individuals and groups. Weed and Erosion control and water quality improvements are the role of Council and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and their works to date have been impressive and we encourage their continuation, provided regeneration of planting is included in large scale works.

-The Group envisages that the Reserve will be largely open green space, interspersed with trees and shrubs [with few planting beds –except in the formal gardens such as Rotary Park, Jack Shiel Gardens , Paynes Avenue etc.] Trees and shrubs will be a mixture of introduced and native species as at present [see Para 3.5.3] The preservation and extension of Alexandra’s rich legacy of some 150 years of planting of the existing interesting botanical heritage is our objective. Walking and Cycling Tracks will be developed [See Para 3.6] . These will be edged and at ground level to facilitate mowing and the colour to be as natural as possible .

- Parking should be provided at each sporting or recreational venue of a type and with numbers of spaces , to be determined with the Shire. Parking should be available for picnickers or walkers, but otherwise cars should be kept away from green spaces, by appropriate measures.

-Signposting to adjacent features and the Walking Tracks, seating , waste bins etc. should be provided. We have not suggested types or design of this Landscaping furniture, believing that this will be part of the Urban Design Framework.

3.3 RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY ZONES

The Group has reviewed “ Hammond’s “ Activity Zones and believes the following Zones are appropriate to existing and perceived future conditions.

RECOMMENDATION II

SEE ATTACHMENT 2 [MAP]

ZONE 1 U.T.CREEK BED & BANKS-Station Street to Halls Road- the Community Leisure Centre.

ZONE 2 ACTIVE RECREATION ZONE

ZONE 3 FORMAL GARDENS AND WAR MEMORIAL

ZONE 4 ROTARY PARK [INCLUDING THE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE AND THE PLAYGROUND]

ZONE 5 URBAN WOODLAND**ZONE 6 PASSIVE RECREATION****3.4 RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS FOR THE
ACTIVITY ZONES IN THE U.T.CREEK RESERVE****RECOMMENDATION III****SEE ATTACHMENT 3 & Appendices**

The U.T.Creek Group recommends the detailed DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICS set out in Attachment 3 as DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS , for the **ACTIVITY ZONES** Recommended for the U.T. Creek Reserve.

These Concepts and Development Specifics are intended to present our views and recommendations to the Shire , as” Controls” for future guidance of Council Officers on the development and management of the Reserve. We accept that it is not possible for us , as a community based group , to foresee every eventuality in the future, but they represent our best attempt to set standards and concepts for guidance.

URBAN WOODLAND

The concept of an Urban Woodland is outlined in Appendix 2 , in detail and the Design Concept and Specifics in Attachment 3. This Group wishes to outline the Process already followed.

The Group notes that “ Hammond “ proposed an “ Urban Forest, discovery track and outdoor classroom “ in his 1983 proposal, in an area not considered by us to be available for that purpose, being totally on private land.

The Urban Woodland we propose, between Vickery Street and the Creek , east of the Rose Street Bridge, is , in our opinion in a very suitable area, close enough to the Town to provide a venue for the whole town to use, and part of the U.T. Creek reserve.

Our Plan is for the whole of the residents of Alexandra and we explain in our following Background Note , why we have proceeded with this Recommendation

{ BACKGROUND NOTE

We acknowledge , that despite our best efforts, some of the residents of that end of Vickery Street have concerns about the concept. We have held several meetings with them, one chaired by Councillor Dalmau and made a number of amendments to the original concept. We have removed a proposed screen of

wattles, reduced some 25% of the trees in the original proposal, agreed it meets their requirement of being available as an overflow car park for major events in Rotary Park, but this may not have satisfied their wishes completely. We believe our proposal of 4/5 clumps of native trees [each with 3 or 4 trees- in one case 10 golden wattles-a total of 24 trees] , with mown native grasses , walking tracks and seats, is very little different to their vision of a Park with lawns and exotic trees. Discussions continue with them. }

APPENDICES to ATTACHMENT 3

[-Revegetation Guide for the Goulburn Broken Catchment](#)

[-Urban Woodland Proposal](#)

3.5 TREES IN THE RESERVE

3.5.1 SURVEY OF EXISTING TREES

ATTACHMENT 4

The Group [through the intensive work of Joan Edwards] has completed a Survey of all of the trees in the Reserve, see Attachment 4.

[ATTACHMENT 4A](#) [Key to Symbols]

From this Survey, the Group has two recommendations:

3.5.2 REGISTER OF SIGNIFICANT TREES

RECOMMENDATION IV

The Group recommends that the Trees listed on Attachment 5 should be placed on the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees and believes that they are certainly of LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE. Therefore even if any are accepted by the Trust, that a Municipal Register should be established for the Shire of Murrindindi and this list should form the basis of such a Register. The Group is preparing the required Forms for the National Trust, see Attachment 5.

ATTACHMENT 5

3.5.3 FUTURE TREE PLANTING POLICY

RECOMMENDATION V

It is our recommendation , after discussions with appropriate Council Officers that future planting of trees should be from those species listed in the Attachment 6.

ATTACHMENT 6

As indicated , using the Survey we recommend where some existing species may need early replacement and we have also reviewed with the Council Officers , where additional Planting is warranted. In general, it is our view that most planting should include a mix of deciduous and native planting, because native trees give shade at all times , but deciduous trees give shade in the summer , but light in the winter and such a mix along walkways is ideal.

3.6 WALKING AND CYCLING TRACKS

RECOMMENDATION VI

That Walking and Cycling Tracks be established , to the specifications shown in Attachment 7 and where indicated on the Map, Attachment 8.

The Group has already made it clear that it supports a major “spine “ Walking and Cycling Track , along the Creek where possible, from East [Station Street]to West [Halls Rd –and the Community Leisure Centre], with Feeder tracks to points of special interest [these would include- Timber & Tramway Museum, Swimming Pool, Showgrounds & Josephine Cutting, Youth Precinct, Urban Woodland, Community Centre and Secondary College].

The Track should desirably pass under Grant Street [for the safety of users and to retain the integrity of the Track]. But the Group accepts the difficulties in doing so. The Shire has commissioned an Engineering Report, which , in brief , indicates that desirable head height is achievable but desirable width of the track , would restrict design waterway area and initial discussions with GBCMA suggest they would be unlikely to support a pathway constructed in the U.T.Creek Channel. There seems little point in following this avenue at this time.

As it is desirable that a Pedestrian Crossing is always available [in situations where an under bridge Track is closed by Floods], then a Pedestrian Crossing is accepted by us as an interim solution, but the Group wishes to express the strong view that despite this initial Report , further investigation should be considered in the future. In the long term we believe that if possible, the Track should pass under Grant Street.

At the request of the Tennis Club and for long term use of the Park , a footbridge is recommended near the Tennis Courts, with a feeder track.

Note. This was also recommended by Hammond.

PRIORITIES It is our view that work on the Track when it commences , should be to the west from the Rotary Park Playground, into an area where no Track exists, rather than in Leckie Park , where there is already the beginnings of a Track.

The attachments give more details of the Route and Links.

ATTACHMENTS 7 & 8 [MAP]

3.7 VICKERY STREET EXTENSION

There exists an unofficial extension of Vickery Street , West, to link with Morris Street, past the Rose Street Footbridge. This needs to be available to Schoolchildren as a Footpath, to use the Footbridge, but it is on Crown Land and is needed for the Urban Woodland and the Walking Track Links [still serving as a footpath link between Vickery Street and the Rose Street Footbridge].

If closed it would mean Vickery Street would not be a through Road, but the users of Morris Street and adjoining streets would have access through McKenzie Street and Taylor Street to Aitken Street and the Town Centre.

The Group has already made a Recommendation to the Shire that this unofficial, unmade, extension to Vickery Street , be closed.

There is a further issue in this vicinity , to which we should draw attention. Visitors to the Visitor Information Centre, particularly those with Caravans , are using Green Street [unmade] as connection to the Highway , rather than turning in Vickery Street. Council should review this traffic situation.

RECOMMENDATION VII

THAT THE UNMADE UNOFFICIAL EXTENSION TO VICKERY STREET BE CLOSED AS A ROAD AND THAT PRESENT USE OF GREEN STREET BE REVIEWED.

3.8 LAND TITLES & ZONINGS

The whole area of the Reserve is virtually Crown Land [with the exception of a small area –including the Helipad at the junction of Station Street & Vickery Street, which we understand to be Shire Land], but is a mixture of old Road Reserves and Titles. The Group has done some work on identifying the individual Titles , but as we understand that the whole of the PPRZ Zone [from Station Street to Hall Rd], less the private properties along Perkins Street [being rezoned by the Shire , out of the PPRZ] and including Rotary Park , is either Crown or Shire Land, we leave it to the Shire whether they wish to clean up their maps , by removing old Road reserves etc.

We do note that there are many uncertainties along the boundary of the reserve and private backyards, bordering the Creek, where actually these boundaries lie.

These uncertainties could only be resolved by a detailed and very expensive Survey. At this moment these uncertainties have little real impact and it is our conclusion that existing fences or apparent boundaries should be accepted, unless significant problems arise in the future.

RECOMMENDATION VIII

THAT THE SHIRE PROPERTIES ON THE CORNER OF STATION STREET AND VICKERY STREET-INCLUDING THE HELIPAD- BE INCLUDED IN THE U.T. CREEK RESERVE. AND BE PART OF THIS GROUP'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

3.9 LAND ACQUISITIONS

The Group has examined the properties surrounding the Reserve, with a view to examining their impact on the Reserve. We have some observations and some recommendations to make.

Firstly , we applaud the efforts of the Shire in purchasing the land for extension of the Alexandra Public Library and those who assisted in this acquisition , particularly the Rotary Club of Alexandra and the Friends of the Alexandra Library. We are anxious to see that the landscaping of the Library Extension and the Creek are co-ordinated.

3.9.1 ALBERT STREET EXTENSION

We consider that it is a pity that nothing was done to acquire the land between the Hec Ingram Reserve and the Creek. This land would have greatly improved the Youth Precinct and the U.T.Creek Reserve and Rotary Park. Should any of these properties become available in the future , we believe they should be acquired. The single block currently adjoining Bayley Street and the Hec Ingram Reserve [used as a contractors yard] would be an important addition to the Reserve.

We note here and in Para 3.11, that we are opposed to a move by businesses in Albert Street Extension , to ask Council to open the connection with Bayley Street. Such a move would cut the direct connection between the Hec Ingram Reserve and the U.T.Creek Reserve, but more importantly , could place children and parents using the Rotary Park Playground in some danger.

3.9.2 PAYNES AVENUE

We suggest that the view to Leckie Park and Dove Cottage is seriously impeded by the property on the northern corner of the PAYNES AVENUE and GRANT STREET and partly by the property adjoining , in Paynes Avenue. Tourists and even locals would not know that a Park exists. Acquisition and removal of the house would open up Leckie Park and Dove Cottage and substantially improve the vista from the Highway and from Rotary Park.

A sign in Grant Street , pointing to Leckie Park, is an immediate need.

RECOMMENDATION IX

THAT COUNCIL ACQUIRE THE PROPERTY ON THE CORNER OF PAYNES AVENUE AND GRANT STREET AND THE ADJOINING PROPERTY IN PAYNES AVENUE. AS AN IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATION THERE SHOULD BE A PROMINENT SIGN ON GRANT STREET ‘ LECKIE PARK ‘

3.9.3 VICKERY STREET PROPERTIES

There are four properties in Vickery Street , to the west of Rotary Park, which back onto the Creek. These properties are not essential to any of the Group’s proposals and we do not recommend compulsory acquisition, but there is no doubt that in the long term, public ownership of these properties must improve the Reserve and Rotary Park.

RECOMMENDATION X

THAT COUNCIL SHOULD PURCHASE ANY OF THESE FOUR VICKERY STREET PROPERTIES WHEN THEY COME ON THE MARKET.

3.10 RELATIONS WITH USERS OF THE RESERVE

There are a number of existing Users of the Reserve. Some of these have Council based controlling bodies, others are there because of long standing agreements with Council . Those known to us are :

- Dove Cottage For which we understand there is a Committee of Management , which may not be currently approved by Council. It is this Group’s view that Dove Cottage should be under some form of Heritage protection and we would be happy to help with this , if requested.

- The Cricket Ground in Leckie Park This has been used by the Cricket Club for practise, by Little Athletics for their competitions [they also use other areas of Leckie Park] and Soccer. Council has indicated it is in process of establishing some form of Committee of Management for this area and is yet to clarify with this Group , the actual area to be controlled by the new Committee. An issue yet to be resolved is their Parking needs.

-The Alexandra Tennis Club It is understood that the Tennis Club is a Section 86 Committee of Council and has plans for extension of their area for Hardcourts and also the need remains to clarify their Parking needs and Parking area [we await

discussions with Council's Parking Consultants]. The extent of their land requirements is not yet known.

- The Alexandra Swimming Pool This is a Council controlled operation and we are not aware of any proposals for expansion. There remains a need to clarify their Parking area , should it be combined with the Tennis Club ?. The present situation , where cars are parked on the edge of Perkins street and often conflict with cars to and from the Tennis Courts is not satisfactory

-The Alexandra Bowling Club is a Lessee of Council and has two Greens and their Clubhouse in Leckie Park , with a Parking area in front , accessed from Vickery Street. There is a need to resolve the dimensions of this Car Park, through which the Walking /Cycling Track must pass and the protection of the very important River Red Gum in the War Memorial area. This tree is on the List of **SIGNIFICANT TREES** in the Reserve and we have already proposed to the Shire that the Tree should be separated from the Public by a low fence, placed 3 Metres out from the Trunk, right around the tree. This will pose some minor management problems inside the fence , but is necessary to protect the Tree from vehicle impact and root compression and would protect the Public from falling branches. Clearly this action would require a slight diversion of the entry road to the Bowling Club Car Park.

In this area also , is the **ALEXANDRA CENOTAPH OR WAR MEMORIAL** recently disturbed by an unfortunate and illegal poisoning and subsequent removal of two major Pinoaks and severe deterioration of a nearby Cedar Deodar and an Oak tree, which have now been removed. This leaves this area devoid of trees. Adjacent is the **LIONS Childrens Playground**. This whole area, which includes the River Red Gum , referred to above , needs a new look and overhaul . By co-operative discussions , led by this Group, agreement has been reached with the Shire, the R.S.L. and the Bowling Club for initial plantings. The agreement has resulted in the planting of a backdrop , to the War Memorial, of a row of Callistemon *Viminalis* [red Bottlebrush] and to the east of the Memorial two Angophera costata syn Lanceolata [Apple Myrtle]. Other decisions are still necessary.

-Helipad The status of the Helipad is not clear to this Group and we have recommended above **RECOMMENDATION VIII** that it is included in the Reserve. However it remains clear that it is an essential need for the Town and the Hospital. [The Hospital certainly favours its retention] It is also used by the Secondary College for its Driver Education program. We see no need to change its function.

Future potential Users would need to make their case to the U.T.Creek Enhancement Group and the Council, once this Master Plan is accepted. However , we would strongly urge that only Users whose activities fit the Development Concepts in ATTACHMENT 3 , should be acceptable to Council.

RECOMMENDATION XI

- **THAT COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OF THE EXISTING USERS BE CLARIFIED AND BROUGHT UP TO DATE.**

3.11 ADJOINING USERS

-Youth Precinct

The Hec Ingram Reserve , site of the Youth Precinct, has a separate Section 86 Committee, with which we have a good relationship. We have undertaken to advise on and assist with landscaping. The Hec Ingram Reserve is currently part of and directly linked to the **PPRZ** .

A current proposal by existing users of the Albert Street Extension , to open that road to Bayley Street , thus cutting that link and threatening the Playground users , should [in our opinion] NOT be approved by Council.

-Timber & Tramway Museum and the Tallarook Rail Trail

This very important asset of Alexandra is a vital connection to the U.T.Creek Reserve and we intend to see that there is a Link Path from the Walking Track to the Museum and to the Rail Trail as this develops, with appropriate Signage.

3.12 OTHER FEATURES IN THE RESERVE

There is a need to refer to some other features in the Reserve:

-Former Bandstand This remnant of a former Bandstand is adjacent to the War Memorial and probably needs maintenance and some restoration , if it is to be preserved.

-Toilet Block A Toilet Block is needed at this end of the Park, particularly for the Cricket Ground. But the existing building is unattractive and is very basic and in the longer term should be replaced , with a modern and more tasteful building.

-Old Netball / Tennis Courts These old concrete courts are no longer used and one possible use is as a general Car Park for picnickers/ walkers and other casual users of the Reserve, perhaps with some picnic tables / shelters and barbeques , under trees.

3.13 PARKING IN THE RESERVE

We have referred to parking issues in and around a number of existing users of the Reserve.

EXCLUSION of VEHICLES

The Group is recommending , under the heading of OVERALL CONCEPT PRINCIPLES that vehicles be prohibited from driving across grass and generally in the Reserve , except on roads , parking areas and other designated areas.

Brief Discussions have been held with the Council's Parking Consultant and their Report will have been released, before this Report is completed. On the basis of our knowledge at this time of their Recommendations, we will include a number of Recommendations on Parking in the Reserve.

RECOMMENDATION XII

3.13.1 That Vehicle access within the Reserve be restricted to Roads, designated Parking Areas and other Designated Areas and that grassed areas of the Reserve be protected from vehicles by appropriate barriers.

3.13.2 That Parking for Rotary Park and the Visitor Information Centre NOT intrude into the existing defined Park space or road verges.

3.13.3 That the Bowling Club Parking area be regulated [the actual area to be negotiated with the Bowling Club] , that the U.T.Creek Walking Track pass through the Parking Area and that a 3 metre –from the trunk -protection zone be created around the River Red Gum on the edge of this Parking area.

3.13.4 That Council consider a combined Car Park for the Tennis Club and Swimming Pool , between the two venues, to remove the present dangerous practice of parking outside the Swimming Pool and the conflict of traffic from the Tennis Courts, with that parking.

3.13.5 That a new Car Park for casual picnickers or visitors be created in the vicinity or on the old tennis courts , off Vickery Street , in Leckie Park. This might be supported by picnic tables etc. , and in the section on tree planting, we propose that trees could be planted within the concrete court bases.

3.13.6 The present Cricket Ground may change use [under present consideration by Council] and future Car Parking may be required. The possibility exists for part of this Ground to have space for the traditional car parking around the oval , nose to the fence.

3.14 U.T. CREEK –BED AND BANKS – MANAGEMENT

We have touched on the Bed & Banks of the Creek elsewhere in the Report , but this is one of the THREE major tasks undertaken by this Group [the others being the Master Plan and Implementation of the Master Plan].

The course of action for the bed and banks of the creek has it's origins in the outcome of the public meeting early in the progress of constituting the Enhancement Committee. That Meeting strongly endorsed the concept that the creek should be managed as an indigenous vegetation “ wild life corridor “.

On this basis a Sub-Committee- U.T.Creek Bed & Banks Sub-Committee –was formed and implementation begun. This group was chaired for several years by Stephen Smith and now includes Janette Currie , Lorraine Pyke and Joan Edwards. Progress of implementation is outlined in section 1.2 of this Report.

A range of views has been expressed as to how the transition from a weedy environment to one where indigenous vegetation predominates can best be achieved. Some of these differences relate to the volume of resources available whilst there have also been alternative views to the indigenous wildlife corridor such as complete clearance and mown green grass to the water's edge.

The following Paragraphs- Para 3.14.1, 3.14.2 and 3.14.3 point to the responsibilities of the Shire and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority in Weed Management, maintenance of Native vegetation and Fire Management.

3.14.1 WEED MANAGEMENT ON U.T.CREEK PUBLIC PURPOSES RESERVE

NOXIOUS WEEDS LEGISLATION IN VICTORIA

It is the understanding of this Group that the following is the present legal situation.

The Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 [CALP Act 1994] is the controlling legislation for noxious weeds and pest animals, providing the framework for integrated management and protection of natural resources.

Managers of private and public land must take all reasonable steps to eradicate Regionally Prohibited Weeds and prevent the growth and spread of Regionally Controlled weeds.

The Alexandra U.T.Creek Public Purposes and Recreation Reserve is Crown Land managed by the Shire of Murrindindi. As the responsible land manager the Shire must control the Regionally Controlled Weeds within the Reserve, between Station Street and Rose Street, including the Blackberry and Silver Nightshade commonly re-occurring along the stream frontage.

Whilst the Department of Primary Industry is the controlling authority with legal power to issue Land Management notices , recent joint efforts between the community , DSE and GBCMA outlined below suggest that continued involvement can meet legislative requirements. Proactive involvement of Shire and it's staff in these processes should be encouraged.

RECENT ACTION

The existing weed control program for blackberry and other pest plants commenced in the 2003/32004 season with funding assistance from the DPI Good Neighbour Program. Prior to this the riparian zone was infested with blackberry , suppressing native plant species.

The current weed control program of 2004/2005 has funding assistance sourced from the Federal Government's ENVIRO FUND to protect , enhance and revegetate the U.T Creek stream frontage reserve. The weed control program is scheduled to be completed in March 2005.

OUTCOME

The Shire and the Parks Manager must remain informed on any assistance directed towards an annual weed control program. Lack of outside assistance will place the obligation on the Shire to implement and manage the annual weed control program as the responsible land manager

3.14.2 NATIVE VEGETATION ALONG U.T.CREEK PUBLIC PURPOSES RESERVE

In relation to management of native vegetation in the reserve, we understand the position to be as follows.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority [GBCMA] encourages and assists land managers to protect and improve stream frontages within the Upper Goulburn Catchment.

The GBCMA Works on Waterways Program performs necessary erosion control works to prevent or repair degradation, willow removal , followed by structure stabilisation and revegetation of native species.

Clearing vegetation has contributed to soil erosion and siltation, having a detrimental effect on water quality and irrigation. The GBCMA addresses the decline of native vegetation on private and public land by preventing further decline of our native vegetation while rebuilding those vegetation types most severely depleted.

The GBCMA promotes action to protect and manage existing remnants, create corridors and buffers to protect and improve remnants and biodiversity of native flora and wildlife , strategically revegetate in areas depleted of native vegetation and increases the viability of threatened ecological communities.

The pre-European vegetation described along U.T.Creek urban stream frontage was Creekline Grassy Woodland. [Refer to the Revegetation Guide for the Goulburn Broken Catchment –Appendix 1 to Attachment 3 of this report].- The Ecological Vegetation Community Benchmark EVC 68 - Creekline Grassy Woodland for native species typically found in at least part of the EVC. The bordering EVC 55- Plains Grassy Woodland also describes local species possibly existing in pre European times , this is also found in the above document.

RECENT ACTION

Recent willow removal [2005] near the CWA rooms and the Library has been supplemented with planting of advanced native trees and understorey trees to provide stabilisation to the bank and enhance the native vegetation corridor for wildlife. A significant number of locally indigenous species have been planted as part of Parks Vic funding and now the Enviro Fund Grant. Autumn plantings will be significant [3600 seedlings] will include native grasses and sedges , [being hardy and low maintenance while still aesthetically pleasing]. The ENVIROFUND will also supplement other riparian zones in the reserve. Community support is required to revegetate these urban areas.

OUTCOME NEEDED

The Shire of Murrindindi and other government authorities will be asked to support community based programs to assist the enhancement of the bed and banks ecology including revegetation support and maintenance programs to improve the native vegetation corridor and protect our natural resources.

3.14.3 FIRE MANAGEMENT

The bed and banks of the U.T.Creek within the township consist of a linear strip of vegetation running in an east /west orientation. The direction of movement of Wildfire invariably is dictated by prevailing wind direction and strength. The highest risk scenario where the creek vegetation becomes a major factor in carrying a wildfire within the township would be under a strong westerly wind.

Fuel contributions to wildfire are dependent on quantity , size , spatial arrangement and moisture content. A considerable volume of fine elevated fuel in the form of blackberries has and will continue to be removed .Some fine fuels will remain, particularly as native poa grass tussocks are reintroduced. Vegetation along creek lines generally is less likely to carry fire than adjacent vegetation.

The ability of fire organisations to address any outbreak of fire within the parkland will depend largely on quick access. Access to the creek and in particular, within fire hose distance, can and will be maintained. Any fencing associated with revegetation will consist of two plain wires, easily cut and post spaces wide enough to allow vehicle access.

Consultation with CFA on these matters needs to take place before this report is fully adopted.

3.14.4 CURRENT SITUATION AND OPTIONS

As indicated in the above paragraphs, much has been done in recent months and it would be hoped that the community has seen the dramatic change from say 2003. It is now possible to see the Creek bed at nearly any point along the Reserve. The work near the Library is a major example, continuing at present.

The obvious conclusion we have reached is therefore, that to work with the programs of the GBCMA, DSE and the Shire and other government agencies, it is essential to seek small scale works, over a long term, by ourselves and small teams or individuals, from this community.

The Group has published the attached Brochure, calling on community members, in groups, families or individuals, to “adopt” a segment of the Creek Banks, ON A LONG TERM BASIS. The Group will provide advice, materials and support. The Group will seek Grants [an Enviro Fund Grant from the Federal Government’s Heritage Fund was made in 2004] for spraying, selectively, of blackberries etc, fencing and planting.

RECOMMENDATION XIII

That this Policy of small scale operational removal of Weeds and non-indigenous plants [to supplement other programs GBCMA, DSE, Shire etc], creating a low maintenance natural waterway sustaining flora that is mostly indigenous and provides an effective corridor for native birds and animals be approved by the Community and Council and supported by community members by “Adopting” a segment of the creek banks.

[ATTACHMENT 9](#)

3.15 HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Alexandra is a Town with a significant History [of Gold and Grazing and Timber] and a number of Significant Buildings, many of which are grouped in Grant Street.

Many Towns of similar age and history have Heritage Areas, within which appropriate controls are in place to protect the significant buildings and the area, against inappropriate development.

As the area of the U. T. Creek Reserve crosses Grant Street , which includes the area of most Heritage significance and the Visitor Information Centre, we have been bold enough to suggest that the Grant Street , between Vickery Street and Downey Street, be declared a Heritage Area and controls developed to ensure appropriate development.

RECOMMENDATION XIV

ATTACHMENT 10

**THAT GRANT STREET, BETWEEN VICKERY AND
DOWNEY STREET , BE DECLARED A HERITAGE AREA**

3.16 ROTARY PARK

Rotary Park is presently part of the Reserve and technically and geographically will remain so, but its management and control deserves consideration.

Prior to the placement of the Visitor Information Centre in the Park, management was an informal arrangement between the Shire and the Rotary Club, with the Shire as Manager and the Rotary Club as adviser.

Rotary Park has become the venue of many of the town's major events and in our opinion needs more formal consideration. A Council Committee of Management, perhaps with representatives of the Shire, Rotary Club , Tourist & Traders Association , U.T.Creek Group and a community representative, is proposed.

RECOMMENDATION XV

That the Shire consider a Committee of Management for Rotary Park, with the suggested membership.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 HISTORY OF THE RESERVE

The Group has been anxious to include some notes on the history of the Reserve and its components and we are grateful to Rex Tate [Murrindindi Historic Register] and the Lands Department component of DSE at Seymour [Diana Williams] for information about Land Grants , Maps etc.

Gerald Noble in “ The Red Gate- A History of Alexandra “- published by the Council of the Shire of Alexandra –1969- has described the 1866 finding of gold in the upper reaches of the U.T.Creek and the consequent establishment of Alexandra , initially known as Red Gate, after the Red Gate in the fence between the Eglington and Mount

Pleasant Runs , near the U T Creek. Perhaps the attitude of the early residents of the District to their new home is reflected in their naming of the U.T. [Ultima Thule] Creek. We understand the loose interpretation of Ultima Thule is “ the last place on earth “ or “ the end of the earth “.

Gerard Noble again, in “The Red Gate- A History of Alexandra “, gives us several references to the U.T.Creek Reserve.

- Theodore Sabelberg's “ British Hero “ Crushing Plant was situated on the U.T.Creek near the present site of the Bowling Green.
- During the first period of town planning, establishment of streets and sale of township blocks in 1867-Noble reports- ” Presumably the majority of residents simply squatted on crown lands near the creek “
- Chinese Market Gardeners kept the district supplied with vegetables from their small farms on the river flats.
- Page 65 refers to “ The Council began arranging for land near the Creek to be reserved as “ a public pleasure garden “ as early as 1886. It was then proposed to straighten the Creek, plant English trees and make an artificial lake for boating and swimming. The Tennis Courts were opened for play in December 1901 and the cricket field about a year later, as many dangerous mine shafts had first to be filled . The Alexandra Bowling Club was formed in February 1904.” Note. This was understood to be first
- operating on the site of the existing Shire Offices , in Perkins Street, moving to the present site later in the mid 1900s.

Other references :

- A Government Map of Alexandra in 1867 shows the Quartz Crushing Machine in the Webster Street reserve , on the Creek Bank and a “ Puddling Machine “ on the Creek Bank near Rose Street. The U.T.Creek is shown with three channels, running through Swampy land, before linking just before Webster Street. Present day Station Street , appears as “ Three Chain Road “. The “ Red Gate “ in the Fence between the Runs is shown as being in present day Perkins Street, alongside the existing Library building, see Attachment 11.

ATTACHMENT 11

- On 29th June 1885, Governor in Council approved “ Recommended that the Crown Land in the town of Alexandra situate within a distance of one chain from either bank of the U.T.Creek be excepted from occupation for residences or business under any miners right or business licence in pursuance of the 10th Section of the Lands Act 1884.
- A Survey for the Shire on 31/1/1887, shows a number of channels in the U.T Creek linking at the Webster Street reserve, with a Water Wheel and race [presumably part of the earlier Crushing Plant]
- On this Plan is the Vegetable Garden of Ah Kong , between the two channels of the Creek, on the extension of Raspberry Street [now George Street , just east of today’s Station Street, see Attachment 12.

ATTACHMENT 12

The U.T.Creek Reserve. This appears to have been created by Governor in Council on 13th April 1887, when 21 acres 3 roods & 9 perches were reserved permanently for Public Recreation and Water Supply in the Town of Alexandra. The description of the Land was published in the Government Gazette of 11th March 1878.

A further 2 acres 1 rood 33 perches was temporarily Reserved on 14th June 1910, described as in addition to and adjoining the area Reserved by the Order of 13th April 1887.

LECKIE PARK Rex Tate 2 & Nigel Sinnott 1 tell us that it was “Named after John William Leckie [1872-1947] an early resident. Alexandra Shire President [1904-5] , Member State Legislative Assembly [1913], Federal M.H.R. 1917-19, Federal Senator [1934-46]. The Surname comes from a place near Stirling, Scotland, derived from Gaelic *leac* , flagstone. Sinnott refers us also to the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre [established 1979 in Alexandra] where we learn that it was named “ in honour of Alexandra –born Pattie Maie Leckie [1899- 1995, daughter of J.W.Leckie] who married Robert [later Sir Robert] Menzies 1894 – 1978] in 1920.

1. Nigel Sinnott- Place Names of Alexandra, Lake Eildon etc 2003
2. Rex Tate- Murrindindi Historic Register

JACK SHIEL GARDENS Rex Tate of Murrindindi Historic Register notes that these Gardens in Perkins Street- opposite the Shire Offices and Part of the U.T.Creek Reserve were “ Named after Rotarian Jack Shiel [Past President and Paul Harris Fellow. The Rotary Club has established a Memorial Community Service Award in his name]. Menswear Retailer in Alexandra from 1958, who acted as Honorary Advisor to the Shire Gardening staff for over 20 years in Alexandra-re Trees and Flower plantings, including Grant Street Flower tubs which he watered daily. The Rotary Club and the Alexandra Garden Club [another of Jack’s initiatives] supported his idea to clear waste ground, opposite the Shire Offices , on the U. T. Creek and

establish this Garden of Trees , Shrubs, flowers , seats and paths, which was accomplished from 1980. Later the Shire relocated the Princess Alexandra white marble statue to the Garden and a Centenary Grant enabled a Greek Style Colonnade to be erected over the Statue in 1994. A separate Plaque identifies the George Braden Rose Garden , added in 1994.

ROTARY PARK Grant Street North

The newly formed Rotary Club of Alexandra , in 1970 , adopted this piece of vacant ground, with U.T.Creek frontage, on a long term plan of improvement for Tourist Barbecues, seating, lawns, trees and a Toilet Block. The first stage was costed at

\$ 10,000 , plus a Shire Grant of \$ 6000. The Club contributed \$ 5000 towards the Shire acquiring a corner house for removal. A Footbridge for access to seating on the opposite side of the U.T.Creek, eventually led to community support for a fine Children's Playground –still in Rotary Park. A second Pavilion and Barbecues [with State Government assistance], extension of paths, and in 2004 a new Visitor's Information Centre and Sound Stage has been added [with State Grants and Tourist & Traders Association support.] The Shire has accepted daily cleaning and maintenance from the start of the project and Rotarians are to be commended for the fine asset and Tourist amenity, the Town has achieved. From Rex Tate [former Rotarian]- for Murrindindi Historic Register.]

The Rotary Club's 30 year History [1997] notes that Stage One had cost \$ 65,000 and a more recent estimate of the Club's contribution , exceeds \$ 100,000.

WAR MEMORIAL Alexandra's Soldiers Memorial was unveiled by the then Governor of Victoria , the Earl of Stradbroke, at the corner of Grant & Downey Streets, on March 3rd , 1924. The Standard on that day records “ the whole of the work in connection with the Memorial was carried out by Miss Margaret Baskerville, the designer and sculptor of the typical figure in bronze of an ‘Aussie ‘soldier “. [Thanks to the Alexandra & Eildon Standard of 21/4/2004] The Memorial was relocated to Leckie Park during the 1950's [when Memorials to the Second World War and other conflicts were added]

DOVE COTTAGE

The attached History of Dove Cottage was contributed by Group Member –Joan Edwards, see Attachment 13.

ATTACHMENT 13

SIGNS

A very desirable need is to have prominent , carefully designed, permanent plaques or display kiosks in Rotary Park , Leckie Park , Jack Shiel Garden. George Braden Memorial Garden, near the site of the Red Gate in Perkins Street, on the Shire Hall & Library describing their history.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORT

As indicated, it is a matter of considerable regret that the 1983 “ Hammond “ Report was not implemented and Alexandra is a lesser town , because this did not happen.

This must not be allowed to happen this time and the Group has included in its functions , the oversight of the implementation of this Report , assuming it is adopted. It is our view that the Recommendations from the Report should be implemented by Council, with this Group playing an advisory role. The advisory role should apply to being available to advise on details for Grant Applications for any works, prepared by Council Officers , recommended in this Report and later accepted by Council and on works implementation. It may be also that community organisations might offer to take responsibility for aspects or parts of projects and the advice of the Group could be valuable.

An extremely valuable role of the Group or any of its constituent members could be to ensure that the Report is actually implemented.

Secondly , an ongoing role is to provide oversight of the enhancement and maintenance of the Creek Bed & Banks. There are several parties involved in this process –Refer to Section 3.14 of the Master Plan Report: The U.T.Creek Group needs to continue , through a Sub-Committee , a role of advising , assisting and perhaps arranging some finance for plants.

Maintenance Funding

As a consequence of the establishment of the Walking Track, also the Urban Woodland, mowing of grass would be needed for a greater area, additional tree work .is proposed in the Tree Planting Policy and funds would be needed for spraying and planting in the Creek. Warning of this was given, when Council reviewed policy on Parks and Recreation , in 2001.

RECOMMENDATION XVI

That implementation of the Master Plan Report, by seeking and obtaining Grants and then executing works, be the responsibility of the Shire and its Officers, with the U.T. Creek Group becoming an advisory body to those officers , in interpreting the Report and advising Council, in situations where the Report is not being implemented. Two Meetings a year in normal course, with Special Meetings if necessary.

A Creek Bed & Banks Sub-committee also to be maintained.

Consideration should be given to the additional Maintenance Funding referred to above.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is difficult and unfair to mention names in acknowledging the credit for this Report and it is true that the Group has been a harmonious [with the usual heated exchanges during debate], hard working group of about 10 representatives of the Members and all have contributed to the success of the project, using their own particular expertise.

As Chair of the Group, it would be unfair not to mention the outstanding contributions of several. In particular: -

-Joan Edwards has provided an enormous amount of technical expertise and advice, but her Survey of the Trees in the Reserve was an outstanding work of monumental proportions. Thank you Joan.

- Stephen Smith gave unstintingly of his time and expertise, particularly in the Bed & Banks Sub-Committee and his ideas remain our guiding principles in many areas, until his own workload made membership impossible. However, he continues to assist in many ways.

-Janette Currie is a fairly recent addition to the Group, but her advice is invaluable and her efforts in her role with the Catchment Management Authority have already made a dramatic difference along the Creek.

We thank the various Shire Representatives and Officers, particularly Councillors Graeme Matthews and Mike Dalmau, Chief Executive Officer Danny Hogan, who has responded to our many inquiries with patience and skill, Peter Dudley who was a regular attendee at our Meetings until his illness and a great contributor, Darren Ritchie, particularly for the Maps and illustrations, Mark Leitinger, Ian Ellett, Peter Cownley and Wayne Butler.

The Rotary Club of Alexandra has assisted in many ways, but principally its financial assistance in meeting our expenses has enabled us to operate. The Upper Goulburn Field Naturalists have provide three hard working members and technical advice, the Departments of Sustainability & Environment and Primary Industry, several members, technical advice and a Meeting room.

MEMBERSHIP Of THE GROUP at February 2005

Councillor Mike Dalmau [Shire] – Joan Edwards, Lorraine Pyke, Graham Page [Upper Goulburn Field Naturalists and Community], Robert Chaffe [Department of Sustainability & Environment [also Rotary], Wendy Williams [Tourist & Traders Association], Chris Petersen [Lions Club of Alexandra], David Lamprell [Timber & Tramway Museum], Jerry Woinarski, [Community], Maurie Pawsey [Chair] –[Rotary Club of Alexandra]

Maurie Pawsey -Chair