



Altona Meadows

Neighbourhood Profile



Hobsons Bay
CITY COUNCIL

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Altona Meadows Neighbourhood Past, Current and Future Development



Location

Altona Meadows is bounded to the north by the Princes Freeway, Laverton Creek and the Werribee railway line. The eastern border is formed by a line which follows the edge of residential development and then cuts along Queen Street to follow Laverton Creek. Port Phillip Bay is to the south of the neighbourhood and Skeleton Creek and Crellin Avenue South are to the west.

History and development

Aboriginal History

The Hobsons Bay City Council Heritage Study notes that “most of the coastal territory of what is now regarded as the Melbourne metropolitan area and the Mornington Peninsula was, in pre-contact times, the territory of the Bunurong people. The Bunurong were divided into six different clans or tribes. Those who lived in the area now covered by Hobsons Bay (and stretching around to Albert Park) were the Yalukit-willam people”¹.

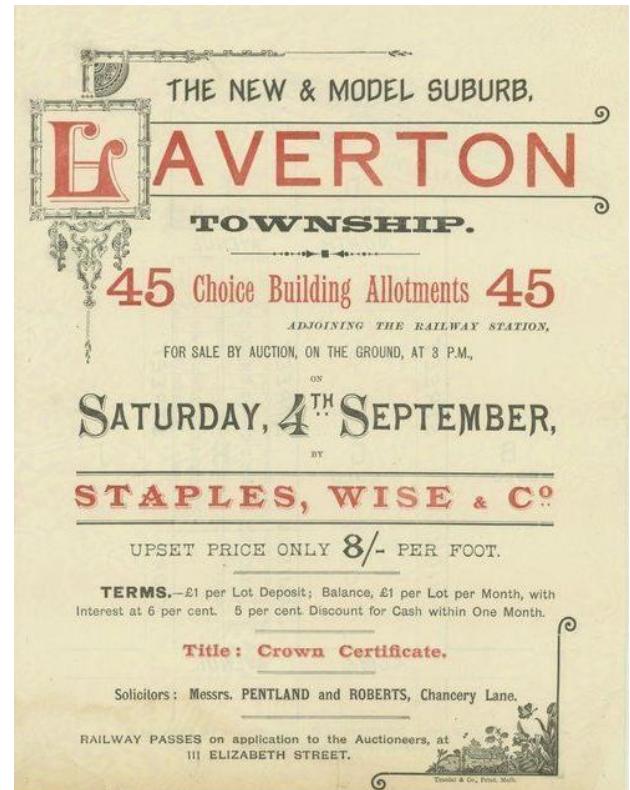
*Yalukit-willam: The First People of the City of Hobsons Bay*² a publication written by Dr Ian Clark, commissioned by the Hobsons Bay City Council, refers to the Yalukit-willam being “semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers who moved around within the limits of their territory to take advantage of seasonably available food”. Hunting was generally undertaken by the men and included kangaroos, possums, lizards and fish while the women gathered a range of food such as yam, wild cherries and murnong which was something like a yam. “In the early years of European settlement murnong grew profusely along the Kororoit Creek and other creeks in the area”.

European settlement

In her book *Altona, the Long View*³, Susan Priestly makes reference to Skeleton Creek and its mention in the journal of James Flemming. Flemming was part of a survey party commissioned by Governor Philip King in 1803. In his journal he recorded crossing two creeks near the Altona coast, one of which was Skeleton Creek, sometimes referred to as Skeleton Water Holes and Chain of Ponds (page 8).

In Dr Clarke’s publication, cited previously, records from the early 1800s make reference to Skeleton Creek. “There is a slip of trees about half a mile from the beach, then a clear level plain to the mountains, which I suppose to be fifteen to twenty miles. Passed two inlets of salt water, Kororoit and Skeleton creeks”.

In the early stages of development in the 1880s, developers of Altona Meadows (parts of which were formerly Laverton) were keen to promote the attributes of the ‘new model suburb’.

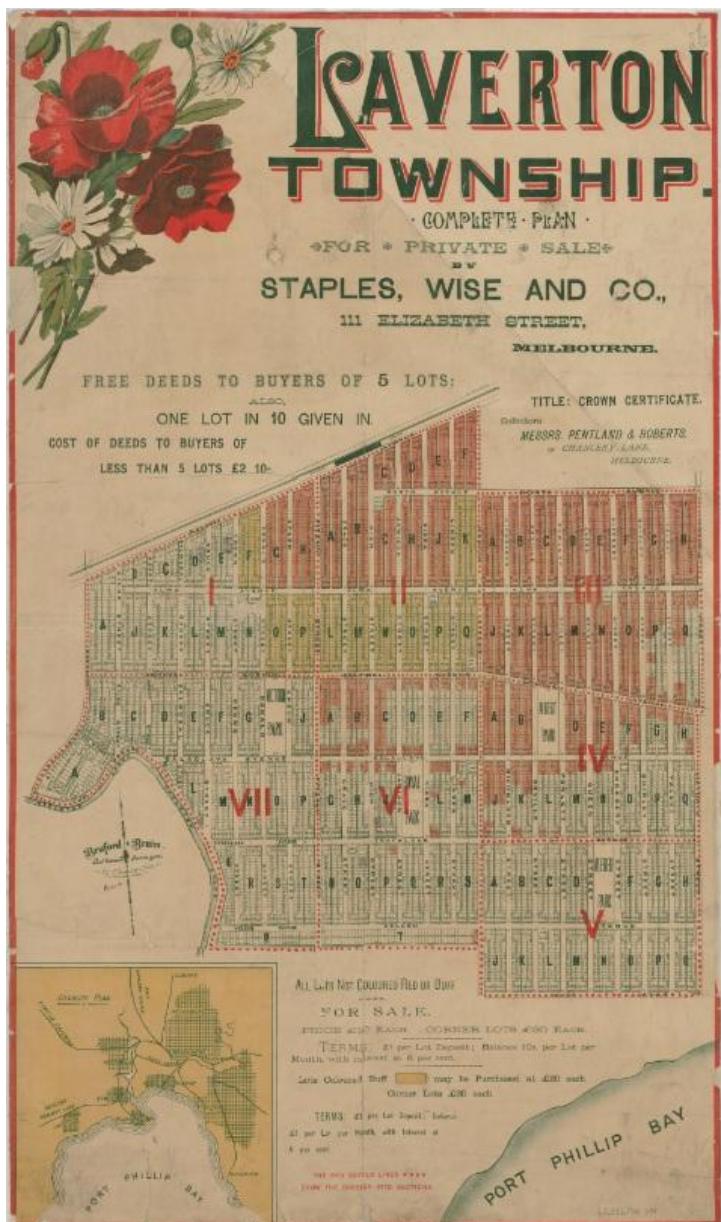


The new & model suburb, Laverton [Auction notice], ca 1880-1890, Troedel & Co.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/181958126>

(More information on the geographical changes to the boundary of Altona Meadows is included in the next section on the current environment.)

The promotional map below shows parcels of land for sale that were located much of what is now Altona Meadows, extending from the railway line in the north down to South Avenue. Lots were for sale for £10 and £20 for corner lots.



State Library of Victoria - Laverton township [cartographic material] : complete plan for private sale by Staples, Wise and Co. / Bruford & Braim, authorised surveyors. 1886

According to one developer at the time, the area has:

... extensive views in all directions, comprising the Bay with its shipping, the Dandenong Ranges, Plenty Ranges, Mount Macedon, and the You Yangs—in fact, every prominent landmark within a radius of fully thirty miles is plainly visible. The land itself is unsurpassed in the district, and has been known for years as one of the richest spots in the locality, and the owners guarantee that every allotment is suitable, without the expenditure of a shilling, for the immediate erection of dwellings, it having sufficient elevation for drainage without any broken ground, cliffs, or other impediments. The price and terms upon which it is offered to the public are unequalled in the history of land sales, and have been arranged so that everyone may have a chance of securing one or more allotments, and the owners, not grasping at every attainable shilling, offer the land at an absurdly low figure, leaving the unearned increment for the benefit of purchasers. That no safer investment can be found than suburban property is now universally allowed, the enormous accumulation of wealth which is taking place year after year ensuring a steadily improving value.

Extract from- C.R. Staples 1886, Laverton, the new and model suburb: with a short history of Melbourne from its foundation to the present time.



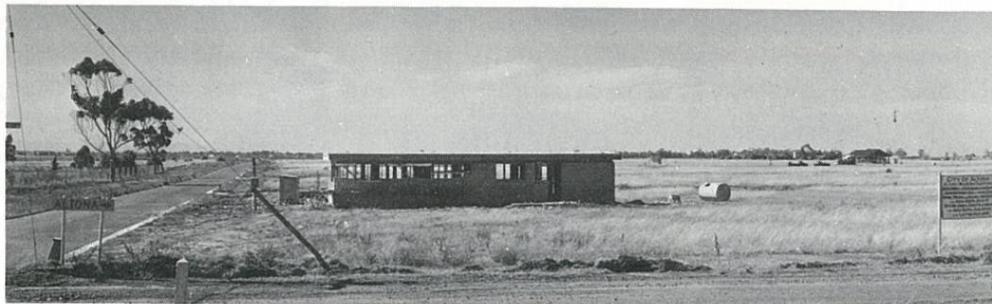
It is not clear how many people took up the offer to purchase land and move to the area, but by 1888, the Laverton State School No 2857 was opened at Kiora Street in Altona Meadows. However, a heritage study undertaken for the Hobsons Bay City Council in 2006 suggested that, “It [the opening of the school] demonstrates the somewhat premature speculative development of Laverton over 100 years ago”⁴, so presumably the number of new residents was small. Historically, the school building which still exists is significant, is the oldest school building in the municipality and one of the few surviving one-room schools in the metropolitan area.

In 1924, the Cheetham Saltworks Pty Ltd bought part of the former Point Cook Pastoral Estate to harvest salt in man-made evaporative lakes. The saltworks, which are now called the Cheetham Wetlands occupied land along the coastal edge of Altona Meadows, extending south over Skeleton Creek into what is now Point Cook. When the company operations were wound up in the 1990s, the land which included significant wetlands and bird habitats, came under the management of Parks Victoria.⁵ (More information on the wetlands is included in the next section.)

Land in the former City of Altona was relatively cheap because housing blocks were generally unserviced and some studies suggest that it was not until the late 1970s that development started in Altona Meadows.⁶ However in her book on the history of Altona, Susan Priestly noted that,

By October 1978, the Altona Meadows kindergarten and infant welfare centre was being well used, and an embryo commercial area was completed with the opening of a self-service store and a butcher's shop. Two years later, there was an acute need for a primary school and by 1983 there were over 400 children enrolled at the Altona Meadows Primary School and a further one hundred at the local Catholic school.⁷

First house in Altona Meadows under construction March 1971.



Source: Priestly, S. (1988) *Altona, the Long View*, Hargreen Publishing Company, Victoria

In the mid 1980s, the then City of Werribee attempted to gain approval to annex Altona Meadows and the petrochemical complex at Altona. Both the Altona Council and the residents were opposed to this move. Residents collected a petition with more than 10,000 signatures, preferring to remain in the Altona municipality which had a good economic record and delivery of facilities and services and the proposal failed.⁸ A decade later in the 1990s, the Kennett Government introduced an extensive program to amalgamate local government areas. As a result, Altona Meadows, which fell within the City of Altona, became part of the City of Hobsons Bay.

The Current Environment

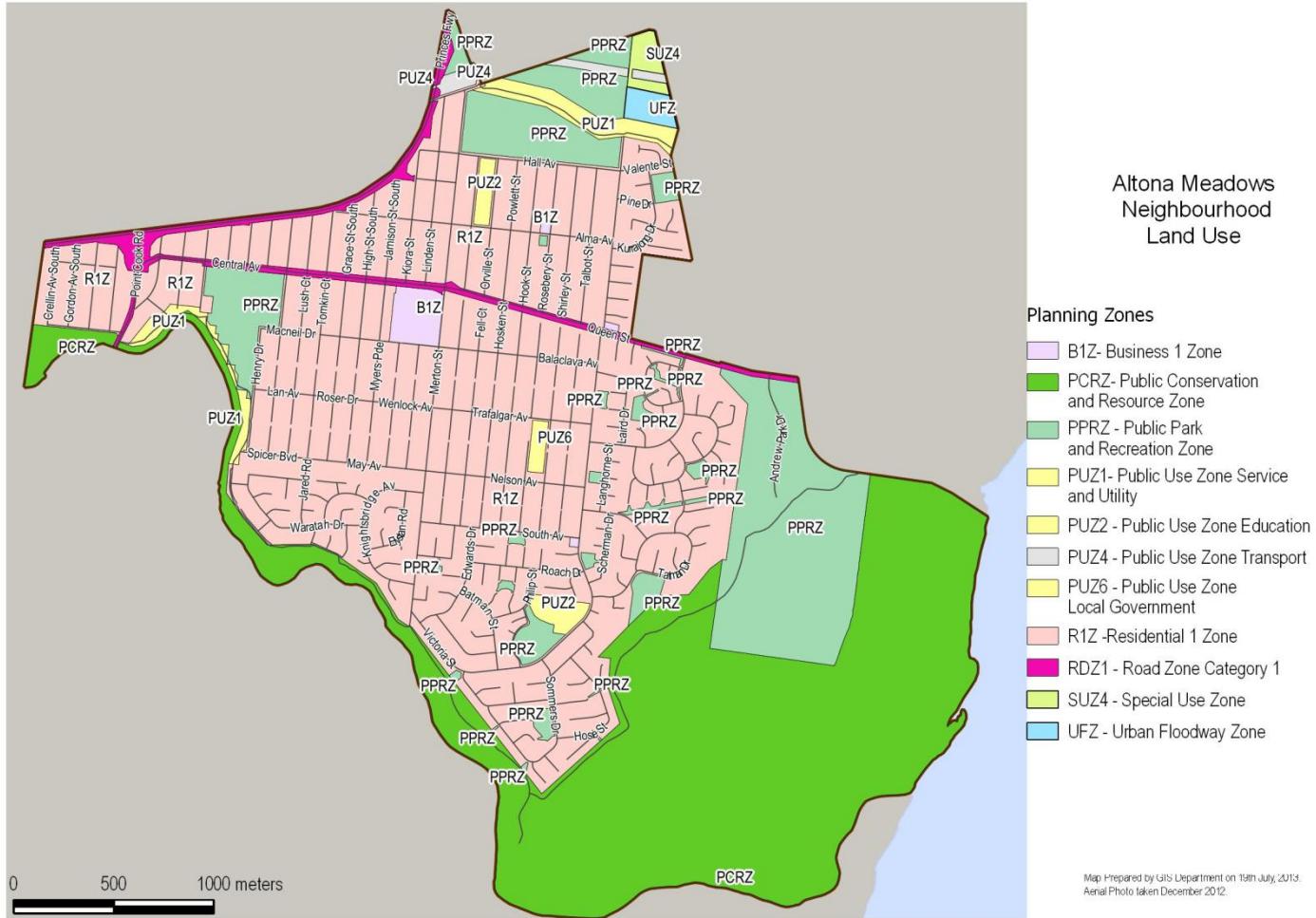
Geographically, Altona Meadows has existed in its current form since Victorian council amalgamations in 1994. Prior to that, Merton Street formed the western boundary of the neighbourhood and the land beyond was part of the City of Werribee (later renamed City of Wyndham). With the amalgamations, the Cities of Williamstown and Altona became Hobsons Bay and the western boundary was moved further west to Skeleton Creek. At the same time, parts of Laverton were redefined as Altona Meadows. Among longer term residents who are familiar with the area's history, it is not uncommon for parts of Altona Meadows to still be referred to as Laverton.

Land uses

The types of land uses in Altona Meadows are predominantly residential (R1Z), public park and recreation (PPRZ) and public conservation zones (PCRZ). As the map below shows, coastal areas of the neighbourhood to the south east and land that skirts Skeleton Creek, along the south west corner, all fall within the public conservation zone.

The neighbourhood's residential zones are bisected by a road zone – category 1 (RDZ1). This road, Central Avenue / Queen Street, is the key link to other parts of the municipality as well as a key entry and exit point for the neighbourhood. The Princes Freeway which forms part of the northern boundary is similarly zoned.

The main commercial zone, in the middle of the neighbourhood, is the location of the large Central Square shopping complex and includes the Altona Meadows Learning and Library Centre. (Business zones were recently changed to commercial zones and appear as B1Z in the map below). There are two primary schools to the north and south of the neighbourhood which are located on land zoned for public use education (PUZ2).



Environmental Features

Arguably the most significant environmental features in Altona Meadows are the Truganina Coastal Parklands and the Cheetham Wetlands. The wetlands and Truganina extend along the coastal area between Laverton and Skeleton Creeks; the creeks are managed by Melbourne Water. Truganina is located at the northern end and is managed by Hobsons Bay City Council and the wetlands are crown land which is managed by Parks Victoria.



Photo: Skeleton Creek

Truganina Park covers approximately 70 – 75 hectares and was created on the site of the former Altona Landfill Tip which closed in 1998. Growing in the area is the Chaffy Saw-sedge (*Gahnia filum*) which is a significant food source for the larvae for the Altona Skipper Butterfly. While Skipper butterflies are also found in several other parts of Port Phillip Bay, the ones found here are scientifically important as they are geographically isolated from other populations and as a result have some unique characteristics. The population here is known as the Altona Skipper Butterfly (*Hesperilla flavescens*). Truganina and Cherry Lake in Altona are believed to be the main two sites in the west where this saw-sedge grows.

Storm water from the parts Altona Meadows is filtered and diverted into the wetlands to create a bird habitat, and to reduce unwanted nutrients and rubbish washing into the bay. The wetlands attract a wide range of birds including spoonbills, egrets, coots, crakes and several types of hens.⁹

There are remnant areas of high quality salt marsh growing to the north east of the Park. Extensive revegetation and conservation work has been undertaken by the relevant management authorities and community groups including local schools and volunteers who attend ‘hands on’ events like National Tree Day. Ongoing upgrades are occurring in the park to improve and control public access and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Landmarks, features and public art

100 Steps to Federation and Time Beacon

A feature of the Truganina Park is the 100 Steps to Federation. An initiative of Hobsons Bay City Council, the steps were built from basalt rock, recycled from a clean-fill tip that is now closed. At the summit of the 17 metre high mound is a viewing area that provides extensive views of the local coast to the Melbourne CBD and across Port Phillip Bay.



H2O Stint Map

The sculpture (see photo at left) takes its name and shape from two of the site’s most remarkable features: its water and its wildlife. This work by David Murphy was installed on the Bay Trail at Skeleton Creek in 2004. The sculpture is located at a fork in the Bay Trail, near Tatman Street.

Airtime

A group of flagpoles erected at the Altona Meadows Skate Park in Queen Street are used to show a changing display of young people's artworks.

Grow

Grow is a sculpture by Jonathan Leahey and was installed at the corner of Queen and Merton Streets in 2011. Made from steel, the sculpture is a large single stemmed flower representing the diverse population of the neighbourhood, the flower being an emblem of friendship and respect that recognises all ages and cultures.

Residential Development

Development in Altona Meadows predominantly dates back to the 1980 and 1990s. The street layouts on the south side of Queen Street and Central Ave clearly date to this era. A traditional grid layout is replaced by streets that are curved and punctuated with roundabouts and road narrowings. To the north, the streets follow a grid pattern.

Also typical of the era is the lack of footpaths in some parts of the neighbourhood. It is not uncommon for some streets to have none or to only have footpaths on only one side of the street. This makes it very difficult to walk around safely and access some parts of the neighbourhood, including local shops and schools.



Some housing in the northern section of Altona Meadows, around Laverton Park, appear to have been built pre 1980s, possibly in the mid to late 1970s. According to Council records, one house in this area is probably among the oldest in the neighbourhood, built in 1925.

Housing in Altona Meadows is almost uniformly brick veneer construction and detached. Unlike many other parts of the municipality, the relative newness of the housing stock here has resulted in limited redevelopment. However, there are some instances of housing being replaced, sometimes by unit development.

Community Facilities

Altona Meadows Community Centre

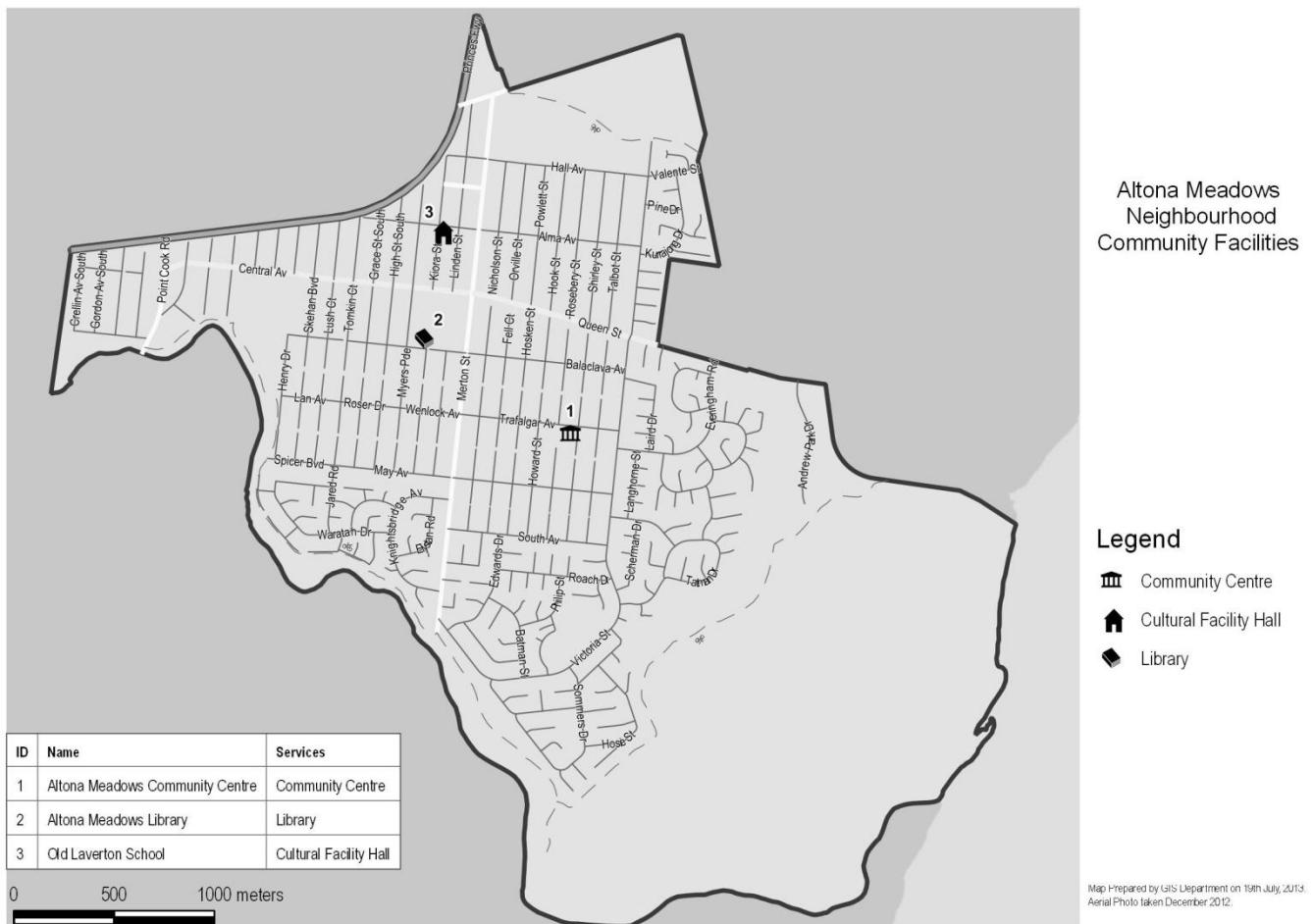
Altona Meadows Community Centre, in Trafalgar Avenue, has operated since 1991. The centre runs a diverse range of services and programs for people of all ages and abilities. These cover employment services, education and literacy and numeracy, disability support programs & services, counselling services and culturally and linguistically diverse programs. There are also sports and creative arts programs, together with services and programs for young people and children, including occasional childcare and after school programs.

Altona Meadows Library and Learning Centre

Located at the Central Square shopping centre, the Altona Meadows Library and Learning Centre is a relatively new building and has a range of books, magazines and Audio Visual (AV) material, including community language collections in Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese. Community meeting and exhibition spaces are also available for hire.

Old Laverton School

Old Laverton School in Kiora Street is a community and arts facility available for hire to casual and long term tenants. (Refer to the section on History and Development for more information about the building's heritage.)



Children's services

Maternal Child Health (MCH)

There are three locations where MCH services are delivered and each is co-located with a kindergarten. These are at the Russell Court Kindergarten and MCH, Cooraminta (corner of Central Avenue and Skehan Boulevard) and Altona Meadows Kindergarten and MCH (Powlett Street).

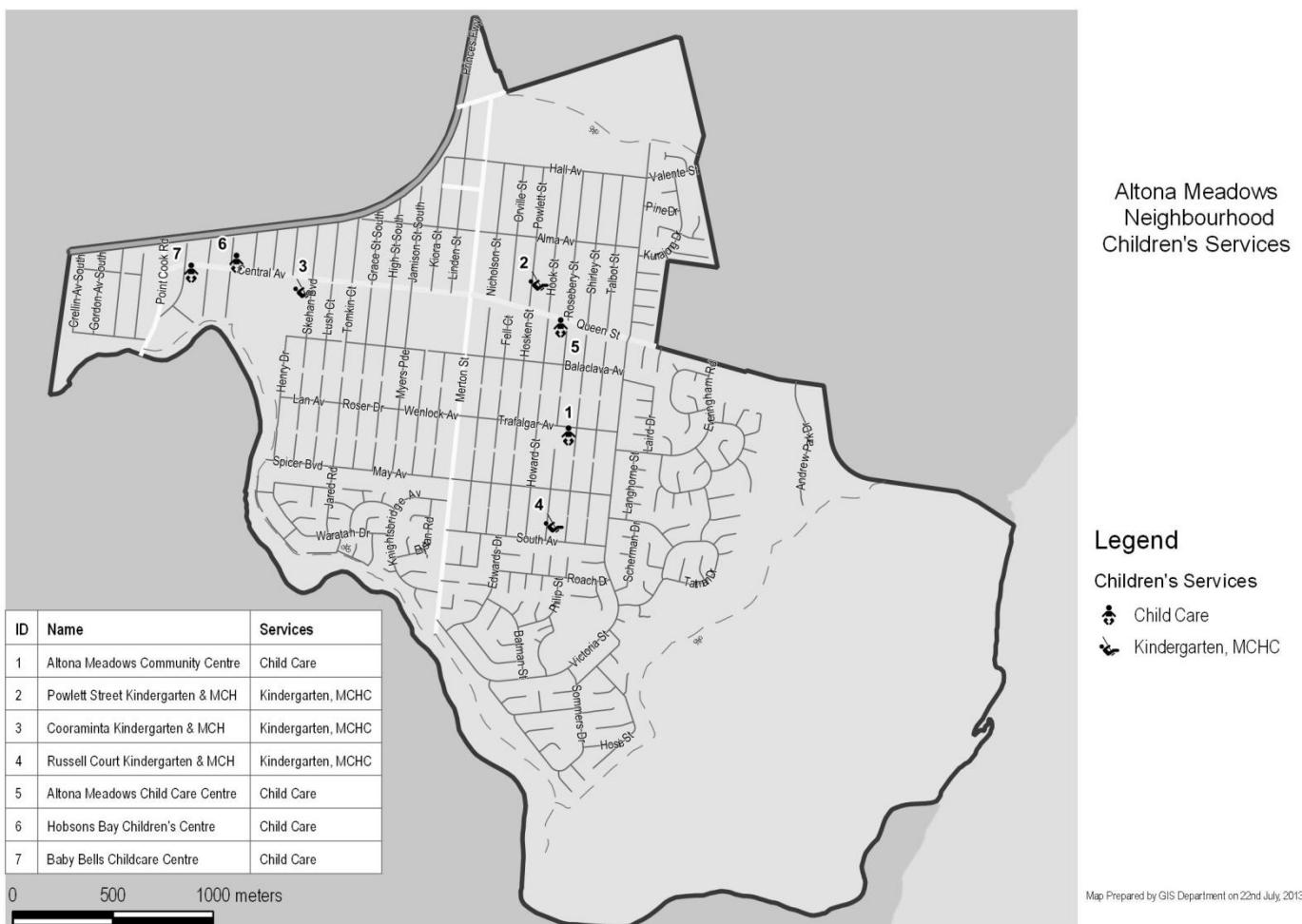
Child care

Altona Meadows Children's Centre in Queen Street is a long day childcare service which is provided by the Council. There are also two privately operated centres: Baby Bell's Child care (corner Central Avenue and Fitzpatrick Street) and Hobsons Bay Children's Centre (corner Central Avenue and Ascot Street South). Both provide long day care.

Kindergarten

Altona Meadows Kindergarten is a community managed service that operates out of a Council owned building and offers programs for children aged four to six years.

Russell Court Kindergarten runs from a Council owned building and is a community managed service which offers both three and four year old programs.



Schools

The neighbourhood has three primary schools. These include two government primary schools, Altona Meadows and Altona Green, and Queen of Peace, a Catholic primary school. There are no secondary schools in Altona Meadows. The closest secondary schools are Laverton (Prep-Year 12), Point Cook Secondary College (Prep -Year 9) and Point Cook Senior College (Years 10-12).



Residential aged care

There are three residential aged care facilities in Altona Meadows. Between them, they offer a mix of high and low care beds as well as respite care. Two of the facilities, St George's and Altona Meadows, provide rooms which enable residents to age in place.

Health Services

ISIS Primary Care

ISIS Primary Care is a not for profit community health organisation, predominantly funded by the Department of Human Services. Among the services provided are nursing, community health, speech therapy, podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, other health management programs and health promotion.



Doctors

There are three medical centres in Altona Meadows:

- Altona Meadows Family Medical Centre, 100 Victoria Street, Altona Meadows
- Altona Super Clinic, Shop 2, Central Square Shopping Centre, Altona Meadows
- Meadows Medical Centre 311 Queen Street, Altona Meadows.

Dentists

The neighbourhood has three dental practices

- Altona Meadows Dental Clinic, 95 Victoria Street, Altona Meadows
- Smile Point Dental Centre, 23 Point Cook Road, Altona Meadows
- Million Smiles Dentist, Shop 50, Central Square, Altona Meadows.

Pharmacies

There is one pharmacy in Altona Meadows

- Pharmasave Central Square, Shop 15, Central Square, Altona Meadows.

Recreational facilities and reserves

Altona Meadows has a range of recreation spaces, both formal and informal.

AB Shaw Reserve / Laverton Park

This reserve is located north of Queen Street, adjacent to Laverton Creek. Facilities include tennis courts, lawn bowls and ovals for soccer, cricket and football. There are also four spots pavilions, cricket nets and a playground. A shared walking and cycling path runs between the reserve and Laverton Creek and the Council has committed to completing the unpaved sections. Works have also commenced at the Merton Street underpass which will connect the path through to the north side of the railway line and on to McCormack Park in Laverton.

Bruce Comben Reserve

This reserve is at the western end of Central Avenue. It has a cricket oval and nets, tennis courts, a playground and sports pavilion. Touch football is also played here.

Altona Green Reserve

This public use reserve is adjacent to the Altona Green primary school in Victoria Street. In addition to two tennis courts, there is an oval which is used for cricket and in winter it serves as an 'overflow' oval for football. The reserve also has several cricket nets and a playground.

HD Graham Reserve

Graham Reserve is at the eastern end of Queen Street, close to Laverton Creek. Among the sports infrastructure is a skate park, a BMX dirt track with jumps and two tennis courts.

The Altona Sports Centre

The centre has six indoor basketball courts and two outdoor courts which are used for basketball and netball. It also includes two meeting/function rooms which are available for community use.

Truganina Park and Cheetham Wetlands

These areas of open space are key linked spaces, incorporating a number of shared paths. Beginning at the skate park on Queen Street and skirting the housing development the main path heads south to Skeleton Creek. It then divides and users can either continue across Skeleton Creek to Point Cook or take the path that follows the eastern side of Skeleton Creek through to Carinza Reserve in the north western corner of the neighbourhood. (Refer to Landmarks and Features for more information about these spaces.)

In addition to the playgrounds that are located at the sporting venues and mentioned above, there are a number of smaller local parks scattered across the neighbourhood some of which have playground equipment. Barbeque equipment is also installed at Carinza Reserve and Tatman Reserve which sits on the edge of the Cheetham Wetlands.

Hobsons Bay Coastal Trail

The Hobsons Bay Coastal Trail which is a sealed pathway that follows the coastal area of Altona Meadows and connects the neighbourhood eastward through to Altona, Williamstown and Newport



Retail Centres

The neighbourhood's major retail centre is Central Square Shopping Centre shopping complex, built in 1994 and refurbished and extended in 2004. The Centre includes several major anchor stores and 55 other specialty shops and trades 24 hours seven days a week. An Aldi supermarket is also scheduled to be established within the centre over the next six months. Adjacent to the centre is Hobsons Bay Altona Meadows Library and a Medical Centre.

Three very small shopping strips within the neighbourhood also provide a local service. At the corner of Roseberry Street and Cameron Avenue are a combined grocery/liquor store, butcher and hairdresser. At Queen Street and Victoria Avenue is a medical centre, a cycle shop and a takeaway shop. Further south, at the corner of Victoria Street and South Avenue, is a milk bar, take-away shop and hairdresser.

Public Transport

Altona Meadow is on the edge of zone 1. Bus services are the only public transport option to directly service the Altona Meadows neighbourhood. The closest railway station is in the neighbouring suburb of Laverton. Trains run from Laverton into the Melbourne CBD and to Werribee.

Bus services¹⁰

Routes 411 & 412 - Laverton - Footscray via Altona Meadows, Altona, Millers Road

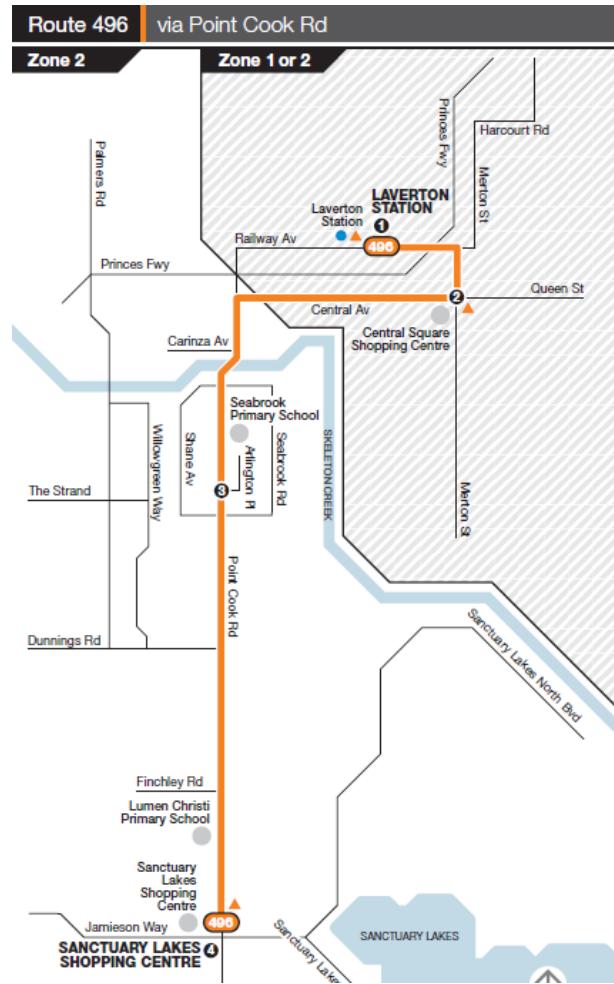
Route 411 - departs from the terminus in Paisley Street and runs via Albert Street, Buckley Street, Geelong Road, Altona Gate Shopping Centre, Millers Road, Blyth Street, Maidstone Street, Queen Street, Victoria Street, Merton Street and Railway Avenue to the terminus at Laverton Station

Route 412 - follows the 411 route, with a slight deviation at Altona North where the 412 route runs via McIntosh Road and Mills Street before linking up again on Millers Road.



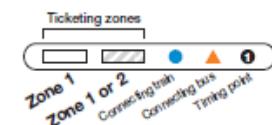
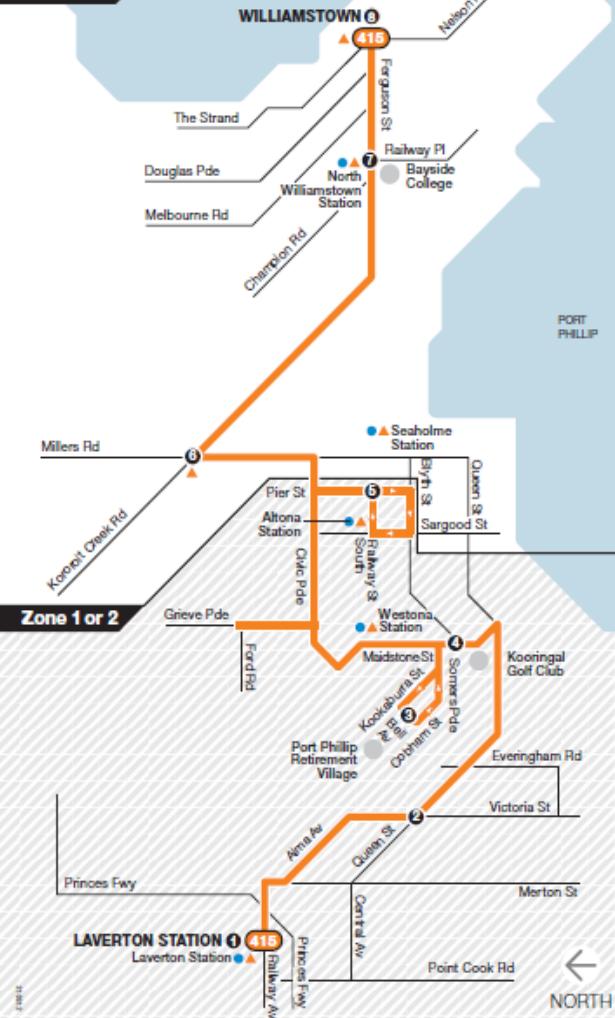
Route 496 - Laverton - Sanctuary lakes SC via Point Cook Rd

Departs from the terminus at Laverton Station and runs via Railway Avenue, Merton Street, Central Avenue and Point Cook Road to Sanctuary Lakes Shopping Centre in Point Cook (Wyndham municipality).



Route 415 | via Altona

Zone 1



For more information visit ptv.vic.gov.au or call 1800 800 007 (8am – midnight daily)
MAP NOT TO SCALE

Route 415 - Laverton to Williamstown via Altona, North Williamstown

This service does not run directly from Altona Meadows but departs the terminus at Laverton Station. It runs via Railway Avenue, Merton Street, Alma Avenue, Victoria Street, Queen Street, then on to Williamstown.

What's ahead for Altona Meadows

The Council works that are planned for the neighbourhood, subject to budgetary constraints, include:

Open space

- A redevelopment of the A.B. Shaw play space at Laverton Park, together with pathway improvements
- New public toilets at HD Graham Reserve for users of the reserve and the adjacent BMX/Skatepark
- Floodlighting at Altona Green Park which is a multi-purpose sports field
- Traffic changes and improvements to the entry into Newland Street
- Works at Bruce Comben Reserve Car Park will include a new parking configuration, lighting and dedicated pathways.

Arts and Culture

- Orbital is a new exhibition space which is due to open in late 2013. Located in an external wall of the Aldi supermarket which is being constructed at Central Square shopping centre, this purpose built space will showcase three exhibitions per year. Aldi has contributed two years of funding to the project.

Road and Paths

- Planning for the upgrade of the shared pedestrian/cycle path, east of Point Cook Road, along the southern side of Skeleton Creek
- Commencement of a new footpaths program
- Upgrading of the Merton Street underpass, including flood mitigation works
- Road resurfacing works on Merton Street.

The State Minister for Planning recently announced reforms to the Residential, Business (now known as Commercial) and Industrial Zones across Victoria. The reformed Residential Zones must be implemented by 1st July 2014. The Council are currently undertaking a review of zones to ensure they met the needs of future planning.

References

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