

Laverton

Neighbourhood Profile

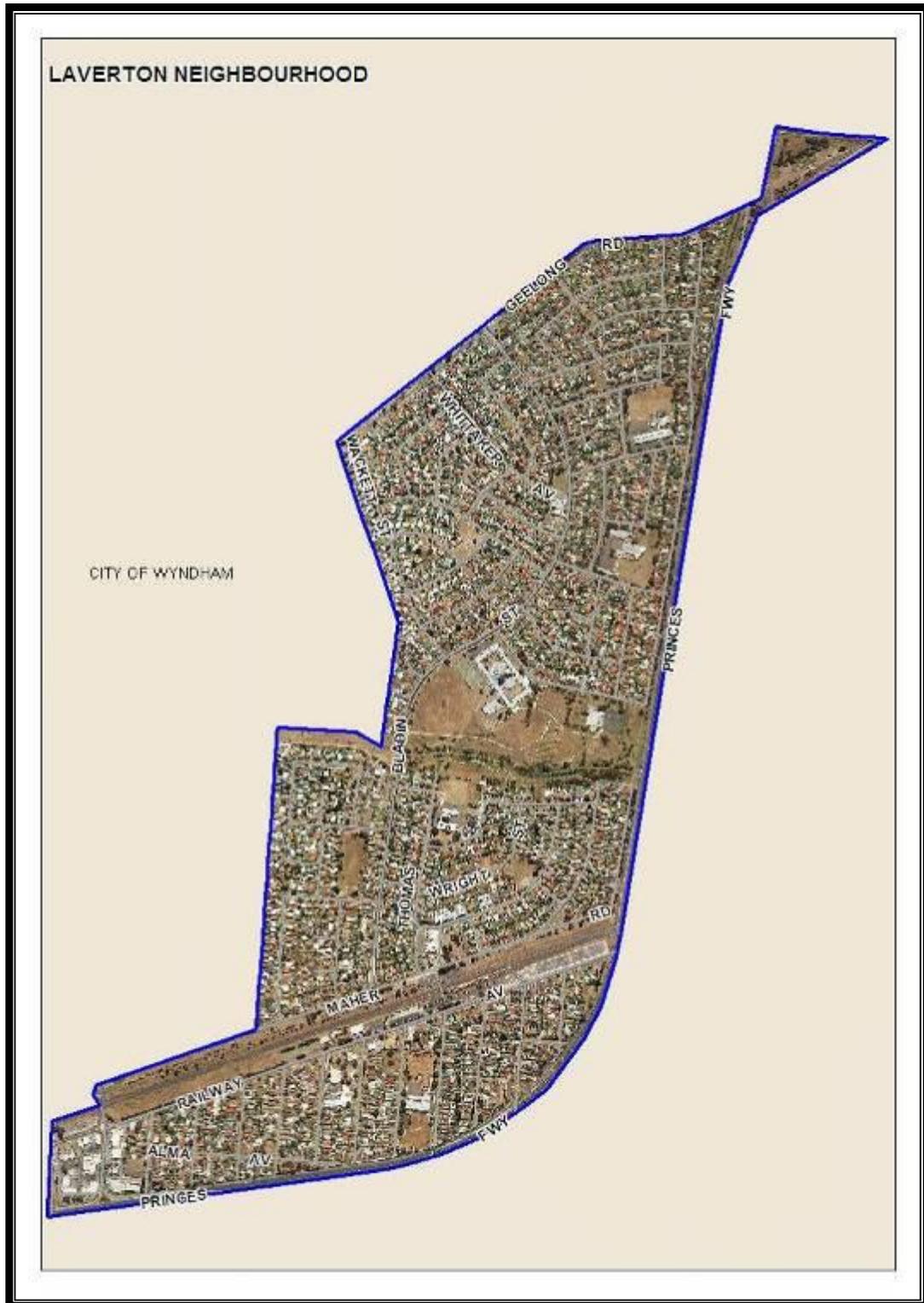


First published by Hobsons Bay City Council 2009

The data profile was updated in 2015 and includes 2011 census data.

Other sections in the profile have not been updated.

Laverton Neighbourhood Past, Current and Future Development



A. Introduction

The Laverton neighbourhood is located at the western boundary of the City of Hobsons Bay. The neighbourhood was named after an original property in the area, owned by Alfred Langhorne in the 1830s. Laverton's borders are formed by the old Geelong Road to the north and the Princes Freeway along the south and east boundaries. To the west, the neighbourhood shares a municipal boundary with City of Wyndham. (NB: Laverton neighbourhood, as referred to in this profile, is the area that falls within the Hobsons Bay municipality (Please refer to the map on the previous page.) It does not include the section of the Laverton *suburb* that extends into the City of Wyndham.)

The Laverton neighbourhood is primarily a residential area and construction of the housing began in the 1950s. The main retail area is located around the Aviation Road precinct, on the south side of the Werribee railway line.

Transport infrastructure is a major feature in the neighbourhood. The Werribee railway line runs through the southern end of the neighbourhood and physically divides it from the north, while the Princes Freeway separates Laverton and the rest of Hobsons Bay.

The Laverton neighbourhood has a Prep – Year 12 school campus, formed through the merger of two primary schools and the secondary college in 2009. There is also a Catholic primary school. The site of the former Laverton Plains Primary School will become the Western Autistic School.

Public transport consists of a number of bus services and the train service connects Laverton to Werribee and metropolitan Melbourne.

B. History & Development

The Yalukit-willam Clan

The Aboriginal people who lived in what is now known as the City of Hobsons Bay are the Yalukit-willam, a name meaning 'river camp' or 'river dwellers'. The Yalukit-willam are associated with the coastal land at the head of Port Phillip that extends from the Werribee River, across Williamstown, Port Melbourne, St Kilda and Prahran.

There were several clans in the area, comprising one or two extended families. They were sometimes distinguished by names of their leaders; two Yalukit-willam leaders were Benbow and Derremart. (Derremart was identified in the historical records of the 1830s.) His name has been used to name several streets in the western suburbs and also the Parish of Derrimut.

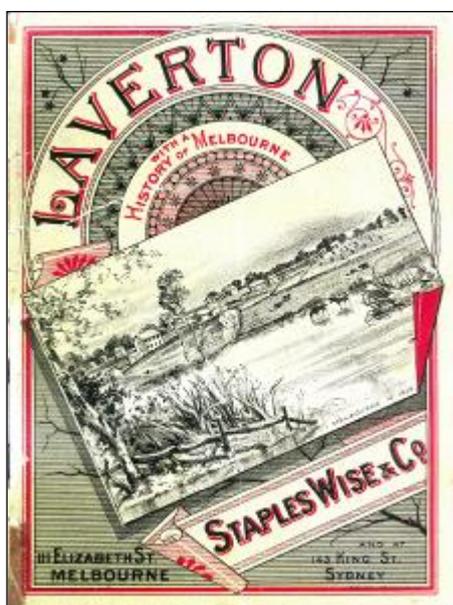
The Yalukit-willam were semi nomadic hunter gatherers who camped close to permanent fresh water streams. Apart from the wildlife they caught, the women collected Murnong, a small plant with a tuber similar to a yam, which grew along the Kororoit Creek and covered the western plain. They caught ducks and swans along the coastal and swamp areas and eels, yabbies and fish in Stony and Kororoit Creeks.

With European settlement, the grasslands that were traditionally used for hunting were fenced off for pastoral use; wildlife declined and the Aboriginal camps were broken up.¹

European settlement

European settlement of the Laverton area dates from the 1840s, with land used mainly for farming. In 1844, a pastoral run was recorded in the Settler's Directory, naming Alfred Langhorne as the occupier of a property named 'Laverton'. Part of Langhorne's Laverton Homestead, now called Altona Homestead, can still be seen in Logan Reserve opposite the Altona Pier.

In 1886, developer and auctioneer C.R. Staples commissioned surveyors Bruford and Brain to design Laverton township and persuaded the railways to build a station there on the Geelong railway line. The planned township was between the railway line and the current route of the Princes Freeway, south of Laverton Station. The marketing brochure (see below) claimed it would be a 'model suburb' with wide streets, land reserved for public buildings and over 25 acres allocated for parks and recreation reserves. Staples argued that, as the township was only ten minutes travel from employment at the proposed Newport railway workshops, land was bound to increase in value. Most lots were sold for ten pounds each. However, the suburb failed to eventuate and by 1901, Laverton had a population of only 125.²



Source: Brochures courtesy of Bob Hawkins (refer to references)

The first school in the Laverton area was opened in a Wesleyan church hall in 1887 and a one room brick school was opened the following year. The school building still exists in Kiora Street (see photo), but as a result of boundary changes it now falls within the Altona Meadows neighbourhood.



Post War development

The area's history is strongly associated with the Royal Australia Air Force (RAAF). The RAAF base was established in the area in the 1920s. The development of the base was followed by the construction of new housing to accommodate RAAF staff and their families. Another site with direct links with the RAAF is

“the Senior Citizens (Golden Age) Club on the corner of Railway Avenue and Donald Street. This building is the former Cadet Officers' Mess from Point Cook, which the RAAF gave to [the former] Werribee Shire Council.”³

In the period after World War II, there was further residential development in the area, including housing constructed by the Victorian Housing Commission. The distinctive layout of the Laverton residential area, with its curving streets, courts and central open spaces, is common to public housing estates of that era. As the number of families living in the area grew, three state primary schools and one Catholic primary school, together with a secondary school, were constructed in the 1960s -70s.^{4 & 5}

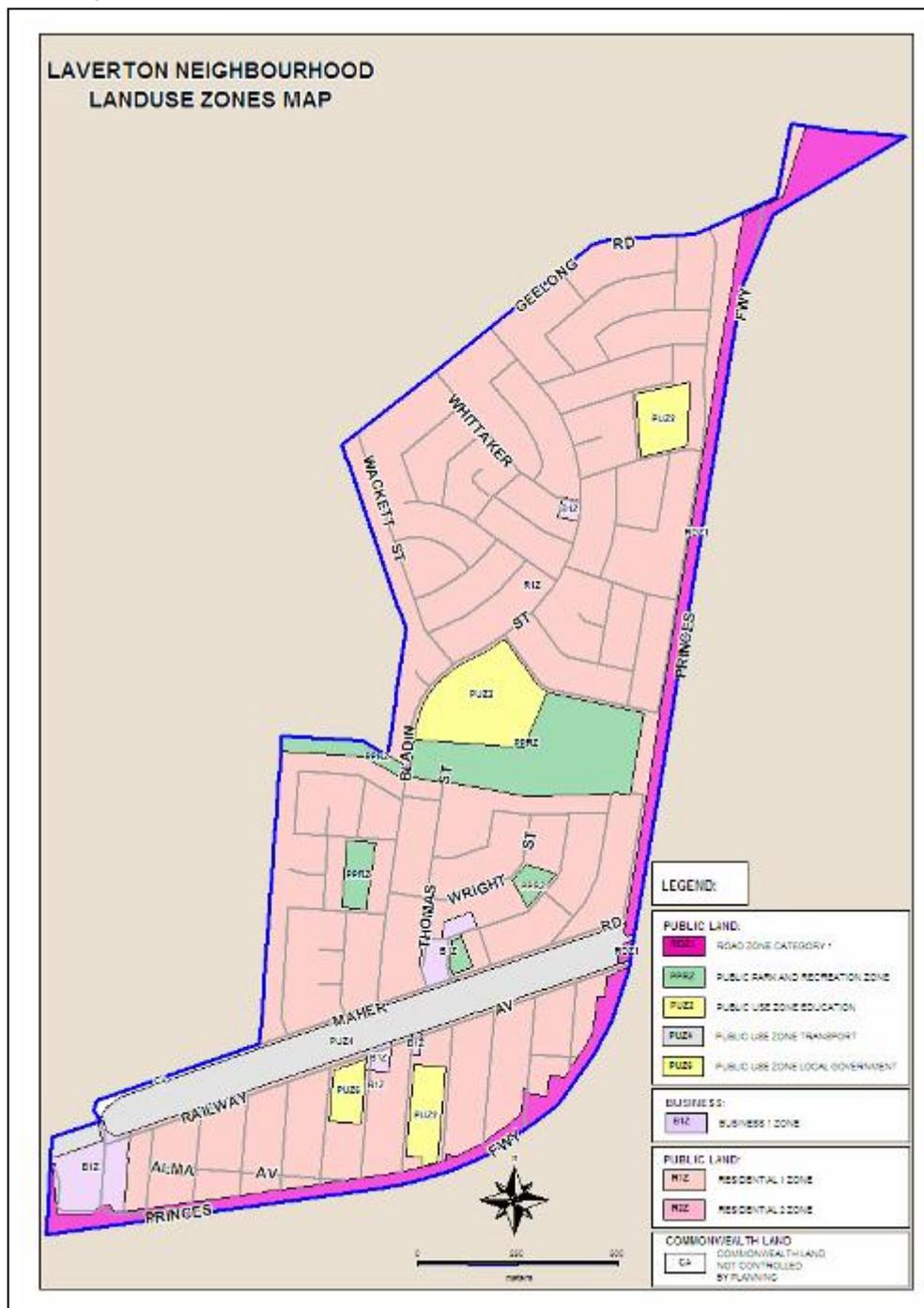
At the beginning of the 1970s, a large area of Laverton North was zoned for use by industry. This new industrial area, along with the RAAF base, provided local employment to a growing population.⁶

C. The Current Environment

Land uses

Laverton neighbourhood has a mix of land uses but is predominantly zoned for residential use. There are a small number of business zones, most of which are located close to the railway line that passes through the neighbourhood, with one other smaller business zone to the north.

In addition, there are several public use zones for education throughout the neighbourhood (refer to *Schools* and *What's ahead for Laverton* later in this document for more information on these sites), together with public use zones for recreational uses.



Natural features



The main natural feature in the Laverton neighbourhood is Laverton Creek. It passes through McCormack Park on its way to Port Phillip Bay. Like other creeks that flow through Hobsons Bay, there is a long history of land use pressures which have impacted on Laverton Creek. Nevertheless, it remains an important habitat for the birds and other wildlife that live in and along the creek.

Residential development

Most of Laverton's housing stock is in the architectural styles of the 1950s through to the 1980s, with some examples of housing built in the 1990s and more recently. Predominantly, the housing is freestanding, single storey and constructed using a range of building materials including timber, concrete, fibro and brick. In areas around Wackett Street where the original RAAF houses still exist, the housing style tends to be fairly consistent.



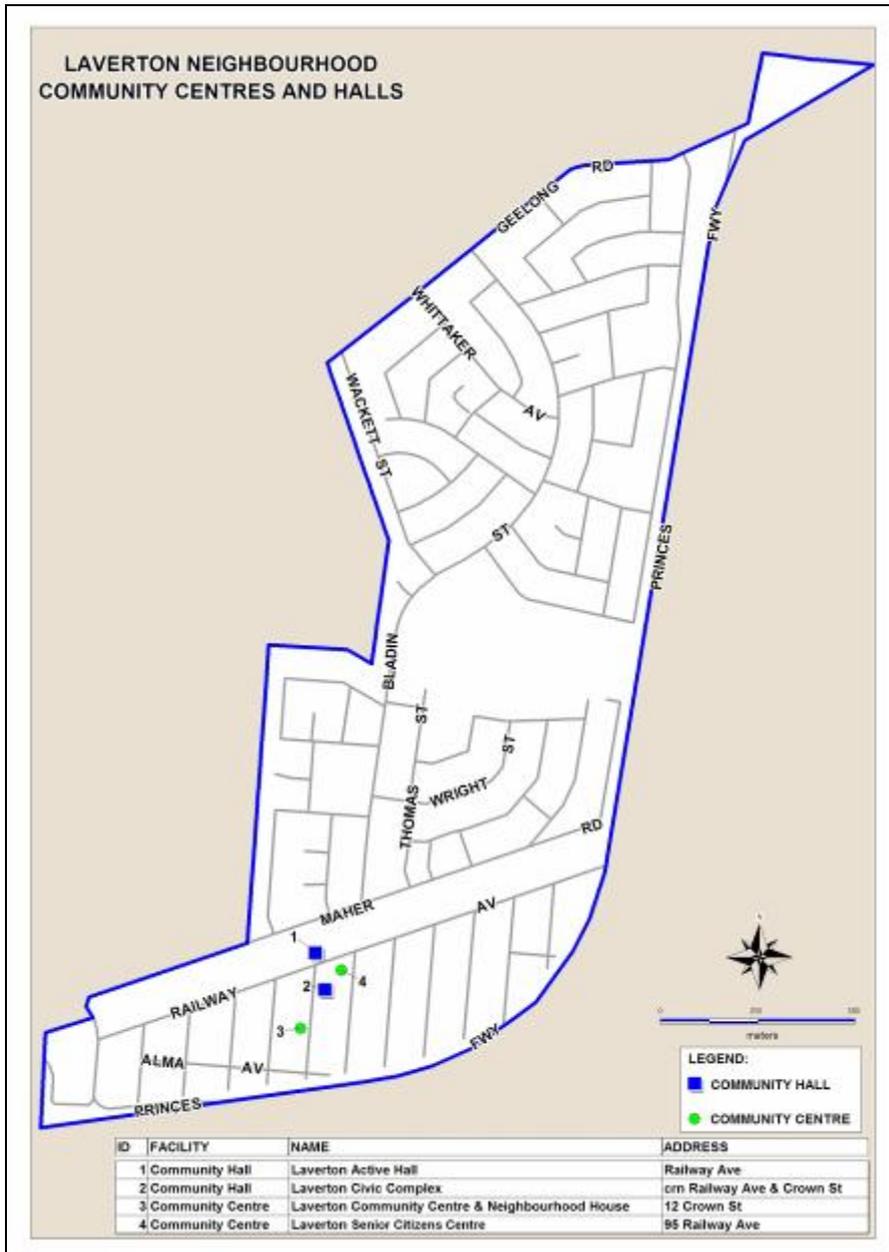
There are a small number of older two storey flats and some more recent infill development. The large size of residential blocks common to the area is attracting an increase in medium density development, with older houses being demolished and replaced with two storey unit developments. Recent building approvals reflect this trend. (Refer to Section 2 of this neighbourhood profile which has data on *building permits*.)

The neighbourhood's housing stock includes public housing owned by the Department of Human Services. While some have been designed for older residents and those with disabilities, there are no specific aged residential care facilities in Laverton.

Community centres and halls

Laverton has a small number of community facilities which operate under the umbrella of Laverton Community Integrated Services Inc. The Laverton Community Centre offers a range of workshops and crisis and support services. Along with *cohealth clinic* health services the centre also includes a community café. The Laverton Community Centre provides training for a range of courses, including accredited courses, and also pre-accredited courses. The Laverton Community Children's Centre is also here. Information is provided under children services.

The Laverton Active Hall is also a Council owned facility with space for hire. Among the classes on offer are taekwondo and dancing. There are also several netball courts located here. (Refer to *Recreational facilities* later in this section for further information.)



Children's services

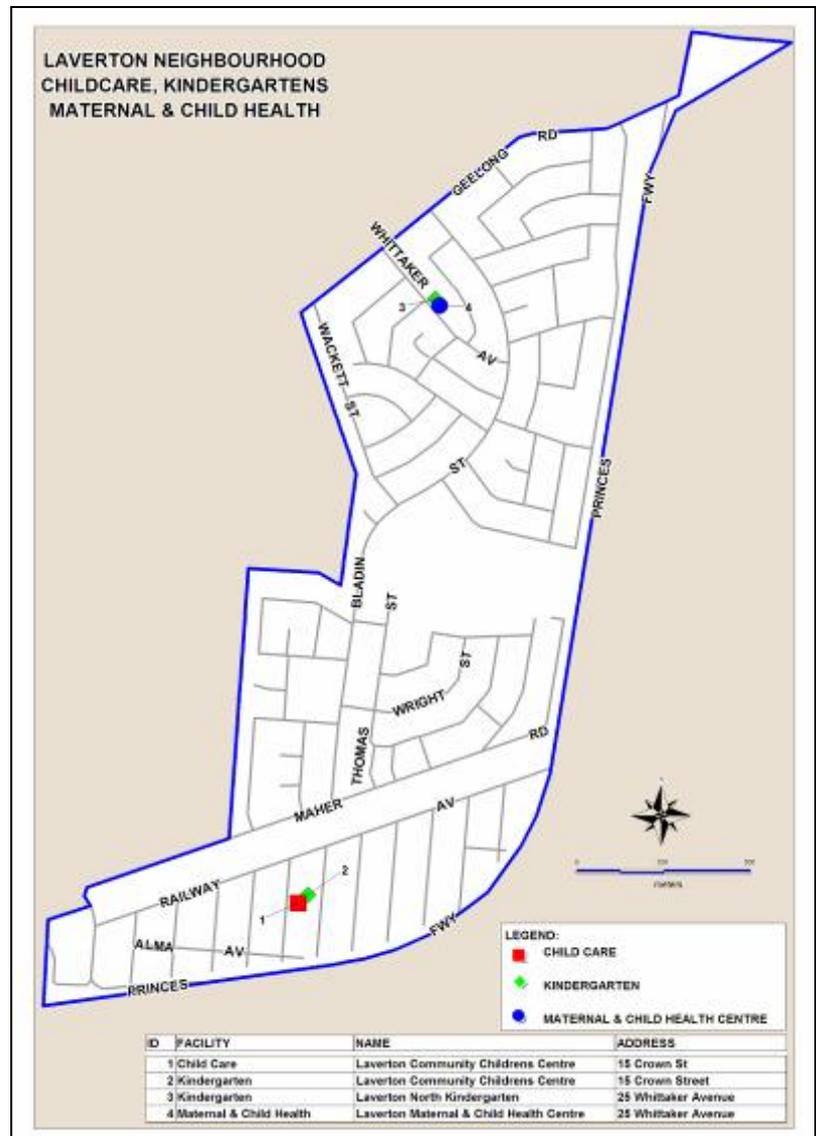
Children's services available in the Laverton neighbourhood include a maternal and child health centre (MCH), long day care services and kindergarten programs.

A MCH centre and kindergarten are co-located in Whittaker Avenue, at the northern end of Laverton. MCH offers health checks for babies and children, advice and referrals and also support for new mother groups. The kindergarten operates programs for 4 year olds.



The Laverton Community Children's Centre in Crown Street, operates in a facility that opened in 2007 (pictured above).

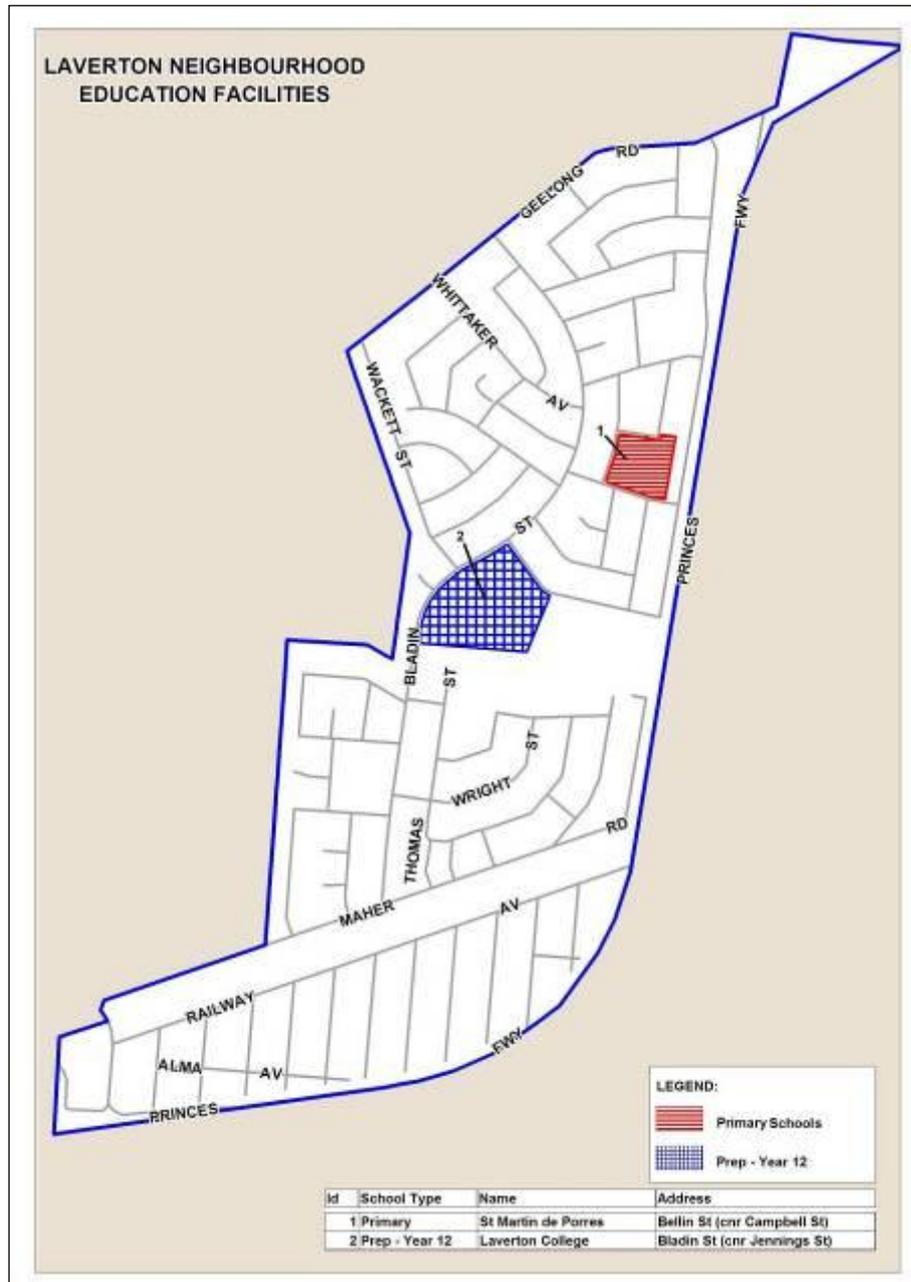
The centre's programs include a 3 year old activity group, a 4 year old kindergarten program, long day care and sessional childcare and playgroups for CALD children and those with autism. Family support services are provided by the Caroline Chisholm Society. The Laverton Toy Library also operates from the centre.



Schools

In 2009, a state government Prep-Year 12 campus was opened on the existing secondary school site. As a result, two primary schools, Laverton and Laverton Plains Primary Schools were relocated to this co-located site. (Refer to *What's Ahead for Laverton* later in this section for information about future uses of these primary school sites.)

The area has one other Catholic primary school, St Martin de Porres Primary School.



Recreational facilities and open space

Laverton has one major area of open space, McCormack Park, and a number of local parks throughout the neighbourhood. Ten of these parks have playground equipment.

McCormack Park follows the course of Laverton Creek. The park contains a skate park which will have new features added in 2009. A community garden that has individual plots for hire, together with communal plots has been established here (see photo). In addition, the park has a children's playground, barbeque facilities and a shared pathway. (Refer to *What's Ahead for Laverton* later in this section for more information about plans for McCormack Park and the skate park.)



Laverton neighbourhood has a limited number of recreational facilities. Adjacent to McCormack Park is a privately operated swim and fitness centre that is by owned by the Council. There are also three netball courts with change rooms at the Active Hall site on Railway Avenue.

Other recreational facilities such as sporting ovals, bowling greens and tennis courts are located outside the Laverton neighbourhood boundary, in neighbouring Altona Meadows.

Whilst not in the Laverton neighbourhood, approval has been given for a large scale residential and commercial development (called Williams Landing) on land formerly used by the RAAF, just over the municipal boundary in Wyndham. There are plans to link the new development and Laverton by extending Triholm Avenue, through the RAAF base.

Laverton neighbourhood has three shopping precincts; the largest is located around Aviation Road (photo below). Among the retail outlets in Laverton are a bank, a chemist, an independently operated supermarket, a number of takeaway food shops and cafes, several hairdressers and real estate agents. There are also a number of specialty grocery shops and delicatessens.



Photo: courtesy of Bob Hawkins

Across the railway line in Lohse and Woods Streets is another small shopping centre. Along with the local police station, there is a butcher, milk bar, takeaway food store and several specialty grocery shops.



Further north, there is a small shopping strip on the corner of Bladin Street and Whittaker Avenue, where there is a small supermarket, chemist, milk bar and takeaway shop.

The closest large shopping centre is Central Square in Altona Meadows.

Doctors and health care providers

There are two medical clinics located in the neighbourhood and both are group practices. Bulk billing is available for under-16s, health care cardholders and pensioners.

Laverton Medical Centre Shop 3/8 Neville Avenue, Laverton
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Total Care Medical Centre, 42 Whittaker Avenue, Laverton

Access to general health services is available through ISIS Primary Care (Hobsons Bay Campus), located in neighbouring Altona Meadows. Among the services provided are nursing; community health; speech therapy; podiatry; physiotherapy; occupational therapy and other health management programs.

<i>ISIS Primary Care – Hobsons Bay Campus 330 Queen Street, Altona Meadows</i>
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Dentists

The area has one dental surgery, in Railway Avenue.

Dr Geoffrey Hart 83 Railway Avenue Laverton

Pharmacies

Laverton neighbourhood has two pharmacies.

Laverton Pharmacy Shop 2, 8 Neville Avenue Laverton

Bladin Street Pharmacy 62 Bladin St, Laverton, VIC 3028

Arts and Cultural events

Events on the arts and culture calendar include:

- The Laverton Festival - an annual event held in the Aviation Road precinct and supported by the Laverton Community Centre and the Laverton Traders. In recent years, this has expanded to include a program of events at the Crown Street precinct
- The Laverton Arts and Culture Forum - two art and craft exhibitions a year and associated activities in the Laverton Community Centre
- Cultural activities - Refugee Week and Harmony Day activities are held annually in the Laverton Community Centre
- The Laverton Women's Network - an annual event for local women.

Transport



Public transport in the Laverton neighbourhood includes both train and bus services. The Werribee railway line runs through the neighbourhood and travel time to central Melbourne is approximately 35 minutes. Two stations are located here, including Aviation station (a zone 2 station) on the western boundary and Laverton Station (a zone 1 station). (Photo: Rail Geelong⁶)

The following bus routes operate in the area:

- Route 400 links Laverton to Sunshine via Robinsons Road.
- The 411 route runs to Footscray via Altona Meadows and along Millers Road.
- Route 412 runs to Footscray via Altona Meadows and then along Mills Street and Geelong Road.
- Route 413 connects Laverton to Werribee Plaza shopping centre via Sneydes Road and Hoppers Crossing Station.
- Route 414 runs to Footscray via Old Geelong Road, Grieve Parade and the Princes Highway (Geelong Road),
- Route 415 runs between Laverton and Williamstown, via Central Square shopping centre in Altona Meadows and then through Altona and North Williamstown.
- Route 416 runs from Laverton to the terminus at Hoppers Crossing Railway Station via Point Cook Road and old Geelong Road.





References

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5. Hobsons Bay City Council, Heritage Study (op cit)
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7. Department of Transport
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Thanks to Bob Hawkins, a Laverton resident, who provided historical information and materials on the development of Laverton.

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