



Newport West

Neighbourhood Profile



Hobsons Bay
CITY COUNCIL

Published by Hobsons Bay City Council
April 2012





Newport West Neighbourhood Past Current and Future Development

Introduction

The Newport West neighbourhood is bounded along the western edge by Blenheim Road, crossing Mason Street and then into Charlotte Street. The northern border is formed by Blackshaws Road and the east and south boundaries follow the Werribee / Geelong railway line. (For the purposes of this profile, the Newport West neighbourhood is defined as the west side of the suburb of Newport. The suburban rail line separates the Newport West neighbourhood from Newport East.)

History and Development

Aboriginal History

The Hobsons Bay 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

While no direct reference is made to Newport West in *The Yalukit-willam: The First People of the City of Hobsons Bay*², the publication refers to the general area and to an oral record attributed to Bembo, a leader of the Yalukit-willam. “Old Bembo recalled that his grandfather recollected on when Hobsons Bay was a kangaroo ground; they say, ‘Plenty catch kangaroo, and plenty catch opossum there’.... and that the river once went out to the heads, but that the sea broke in and that Hobsons Bay, which was once hunting ground, became what it is.”³

European Settlement

Like several other areas in the municipality, the early history of Newport West is closely associated with the quarrying of bluestone. “From the earliest years of settlement this resource was exploited by quarrying for use in constructing buildings and bridges, paving roads and as ballast for shipping. Quarrying took place at Williamstown, Spotswood, Newport, Yarraville, Altona, Brooklyn and Kingsville. In effect, quarrying was Hobsons Bay’s first heavy industry.”³

There were a number of quarries at Newport West in the 1880s and 1890s. The site of one quarry is where the Newport Lakes Park has been developed. Initially, this area incorporated about 158 acres and was called ‘Goose Flats’ by European settlers. It was bought by Thomas



Hall in 1852 and after being farmed by several owners, part of the property was leased in 1869 for one hundred pounds for use as a quarry. ⁴

The site was still being quarried up until the late 1960s. It was then used as a tip before being developed into a park in the 1970s. (Refer to Environmental Features section)

In addition to its links to bluestone, it is impossible to separate the history of Newport West from the development of Melbourne's railway system. The Geelong and Melbourne Railway Company proposed connecting the Williamstown and Geelong with a line that terminated at a temporary station at Newport, which at the time was called Greenwich and sometimes Geelong Junction. The line crossed pastoral farming country in North Altona and Newport and was opened in June 1857. Geelong Junction (Newport) opened in March 1859. It was renamed Williamstown Junction in 1868 and then again to Newport in 1881.

Alongside this rail line development were plans to build a workshop to replace temporary ones in Williamstown. However, "it was not until 1880 that work began, when the Victorian Railways purchased annexes used at the 1880 Melbourne Exhibition and erected one of them at Newport. The first carriages built by the workshops were completed in 1889, with locomotives manufactured by the Phoenix Foundry in Ballarat." ⁵

(NB The actual site of the Newport workshops is located within the boundary of the Williamstown North neighbourhood; however they are intrinsically linked to the history of Newport West and its surrounds.)

At its peak, the Newport workshops employed around 5,000 workers and it's said to be the place where the game of Trugo originated, invented by workers in the 1920s. The original workshops have been maintained for heritage uses. New buildings that were later constructed in the 1980s are still in operation. ⁶

The development of the rail and the railway workshops attracted industry to the area. One such industry was the Newport flour mills which were established in 1902, between Melbourne Road and the rail line. The mill was later operated by the Victorian Oatgrowers Pool for oat crushing, before Defiance Milling Co. took it over and returned it to flour milling in 1986. The building is still there but is no longer used as a mill. (refer to What's Ahead)



The Newport Hotel (now called Seagulls)
 Source: State Library of Victoria
<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv-pic-aab41496/1/a02469>

To service the thirsty railway workers, the Newport Hotel, on the corner of Melbourne Road and Mason Street, was built in 1888 (now called Seagulls).

As the neighbourhood developed, so too did other community infrastructure. At the time, few workers had access to education. The response was to build mechanics institutes which also included libraries and so the Newport Mechanics' Institute Hall was built in 1935. It was later converted to a public library in the late 1960s which is still operating at the original Mason Street site.

Another building still standing in Newport is the Masonic Hall on Melbourne Road. It was constructed in 1924-25 and replaced an earlier hall in the area.⁷ (refer to What's Ahead section)

Newport West also had its own picture theatre in Melbourne Road. The building was on or near the site of the current Centrelink offices. Reference is made to it in newspaper articles in The Argus and the Williamstown Chronicle, dating back to the 1920s and 1930s.



Newport Masonic Hall

To cater for the families of the local workers, Newport School (now Newport Lakes Primary School) opened in 1855 as a "private school on a private village 'Cambridge' which stretched from Blackshaws Road, over the Railways Ways and Works Yards to Burleigh Street". It became Cambridge National School in 1856 and subsequently had a number of name changes (Geelong Junction, Williamstown Junction, Newport, Newport Lakes). It moved to its current site in Elizabeth St in 1886 and is the oldest continuously operating government school in the western suburbs.⁸

In terms of housing development, Newport West first began to attract residents in the 1880s when the railway workshops were being constructed. In 1885, the Newport Estate, to the west of the railway workshops, was marketed for residential development, as was Halls Farm.



According to the Victorian Heritage Database, the plans for the neighbourhood indicate that a small pocket between Jack, Mirils, Mason and Anderson Streets was almost fully developed by 1936. On the north of Mason Street most blocks south of Junction Street were developed and were bordered by the quarries along on the western edge.⁹

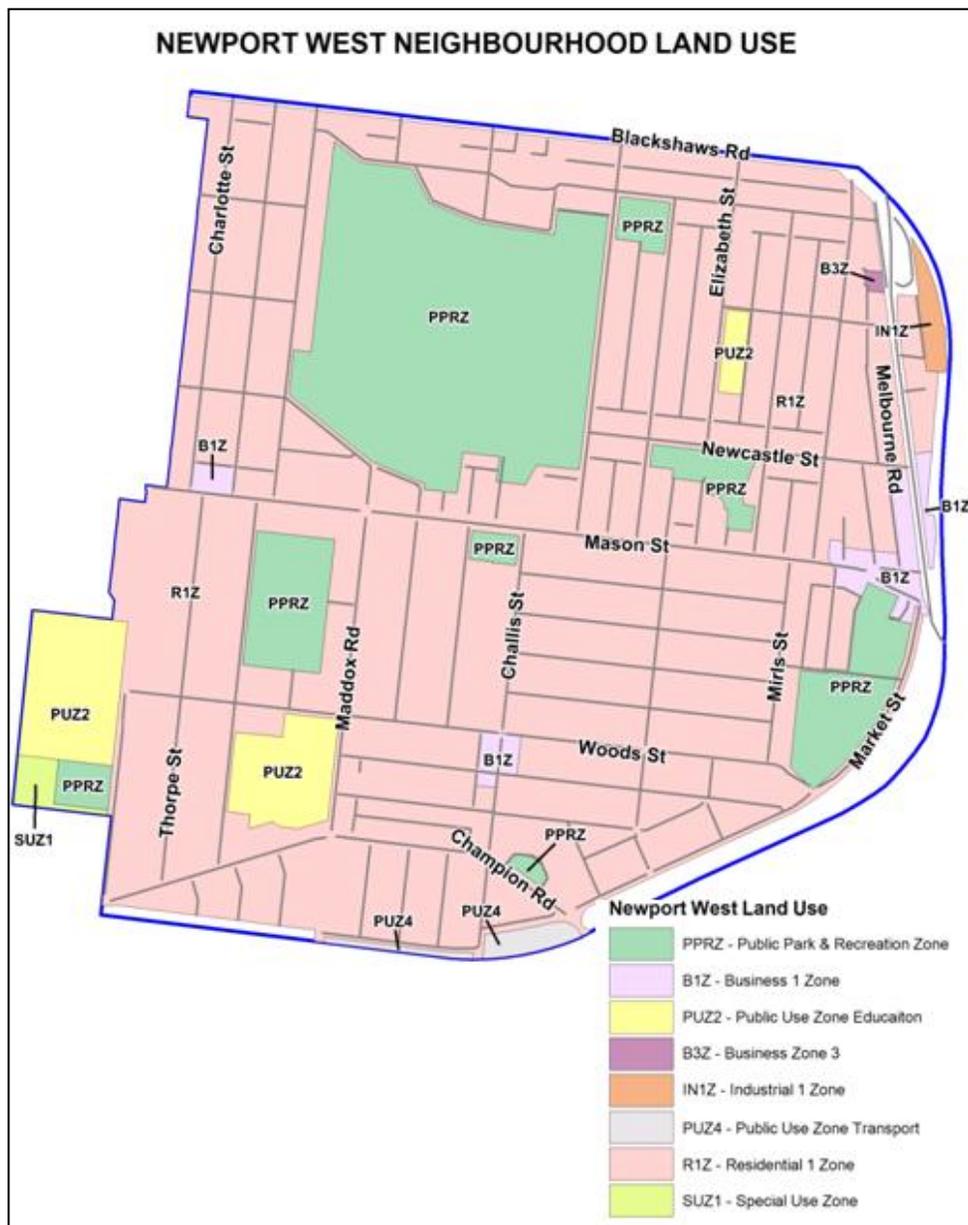
By the 1940s the Housing Commission of Victoria had begun building in the neighbourhood, constructing the Champion Road Estate in 1941 and the West Newport Estate after 1945. The Railways Department also built housing in Newport West in response to post-war housing shortages.

The Railways' homes, for employees were pre-fabricated and imported from England and erected in a small pocket bounded by Challis and Jubilee Streets, Rosshire Road and the railway line.¹⁰

The Current Environment

Land uses

Newport West is predominantly zoned for residential use (R1Z). The other main zone is for use as public parks and recreation (PPRZ). There is a scattering of business zones (BZ1 and BZ3) which are generally the activity centres and also several education zones (PUZ2). In addition there is one special use zone (SUZ1) to the south west where a mosque is to be developed and an industrial zone (IN1Z) to the north east, the location of a now disused Newport flour mill.



Environmental Features

Probably the most significant environmental feature in Newport West is Newport Lakes Park. The park covers 33 hectares and was developed on the site of a former bluestone quarry and rubbish tip (refer to European Settlement).

Extensive revegetation works have been undertaken and over 200 species of plants and 85 species of birds have been recorded at the site.



Landmarks



The Substation

The Substation is a local landmark that was built in the early 1900s to provide power to support the electrification of Melbourne's rail network. It began operation in 1920 and was later replaced by new buildings at Yarraville and Williamstown in 1967. It was left unused until 1996 when, through the efforts of local residents, work began to restore the building and convert it into a community arts facility which opened in 2008 (see Community Facilities).

The Newport Flour Mill

Older residents are likely to be more familiar with the Newport Flour Mill that is located between Melbourne Road and the rail line. Built in 1902, the building was used to mill both flour and oats. Operations at the mill ceased in the mid 2000s.

Residential Development



Apart from the busiest roads such as Melbourne and Blackshaws Road and to a lesser extent Mason Street, the general feel of the neighbourhood is relatively quiet, with established street trees and recreational spaces.

The type of residential development in Newport West varies considerably in terms of period and the styles of homes. Overall, housing on the northern side of Mason Street appears to be from an older period compared to the south side. Examples from

the Victorian era, together with the Edwardian and inter-war period, are common. There is also some newer infill development, although this is not wide spread.

On the south, the housing is a more eclectic mix. Californian bungalows sit beside brick veneers from the 1950s, 60s and 70s and there is also a noticeable level of new townhouse and unit development. Recent development has seen a shift from detached housing, replaced by two or three townhouses on an allotment. As mentioned earlier, Newport West also has a small tract of housing, on this side of Mason Street that was developed in the 1940s by the State Housing Commission.





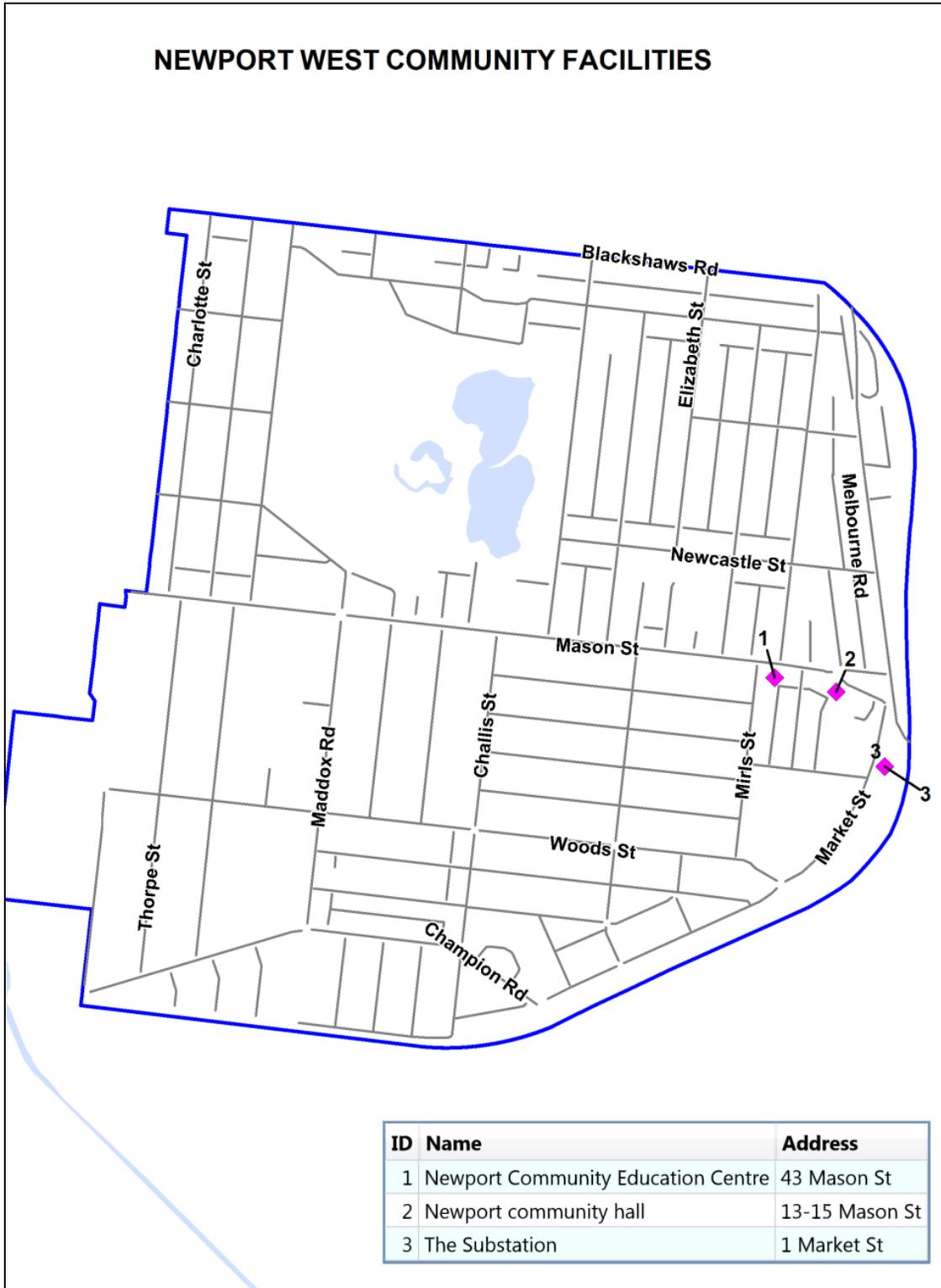
Community Facilities

The Newport Community Education Centre is a not for profit, community based centre that offers a number of accredited adult education including literacy and English courses, pre-accreditation workshops for food handling and safety, together with computer, governance training, recreational and health and fitness courses. The centre also provides occasional childcare and runs children's activities (refer to Children's Services).

The Substation is a not-for-profit, community-based arts centre. It is an important arts facility, not only for the neighbourhood, but at a municipal and regional level. Together with music, theatre, dance and the visual arts, the Substation also hosts a range of workshops and programs for the local community.

The Newport Community Hall in Mason Street is a community managed hall that can be hired and holds approximately 70 people.

NEWPORT WEST COMMUNITY FACILITIES





Children's Services

Several services for babies and young children operate out of facilities in Newport West.

Maternal Child and Health nurses provide services for infants and young children in rooms adjacent to Paine Reserve in Mason Street. The office is open five days a week.

Outlets children's centre provides permanent and occasional care. It offers both full and half day childcare for children aged 0 - 6 years. The centre is located in Mason Street and operates out of the Newport Community Education Centre.

The Hobsons Bay Kindergarten is community managed service in a Council owned facility. It offers both three and four year old kindergarten. While currently located in Woods Street, plans are in progress to relocate the kindergarten to the site of the Newport Gardens Primary School in Maddox Road (refer to What's Ahead).





Schools

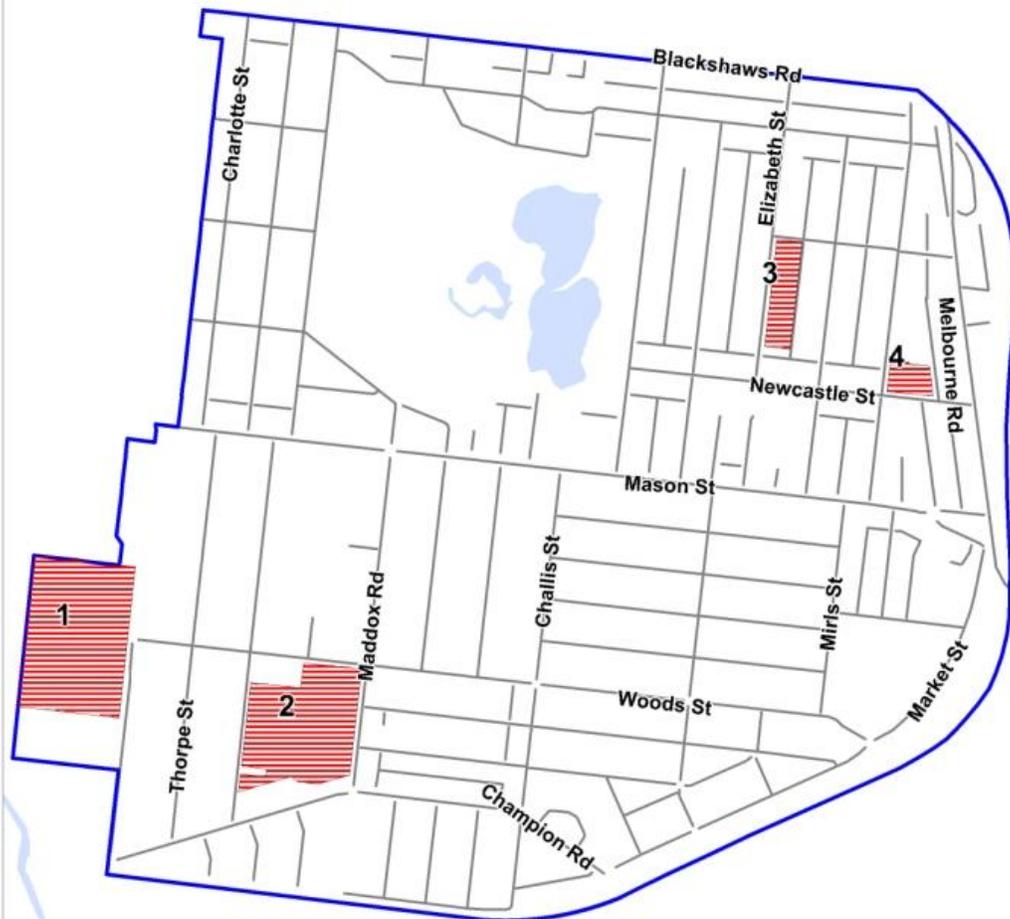
There are three primary schools and one senior secondary school in Newport West.

Newport Lakes Primary School, in Elizabeth Street, and Newport Gardens Primary School, in Maddox Road, are both government schools. Newport Lakes relocated to its current site in 1886 and is the oldest continuously operating government school in the western suburbs. Newport Gardens Primary School opened in 2010 and is built on the site of the former Hobsons Bay Primary School.

Sacred Heart school is a Catholic primary school that opened its doors in 1901 and is located in Newcastle Street.

Bayside Secondary College - Paisley Senior Campus is located in Blenheim Road. The school is for Years 10 to 12.

NEWPORT WEST EDUCATION FACILITIES



ID	Name	Address
1	Bayside Senior Secondary College (Paisley Campus)	Blenheim Rd
2	Newport Gardens Primary Schools	41 Maddox Rd
3	Newport Lakes Primary School	Elizabeth St (cnr Ross St)
4	Sacred Heart Catholic School	20 Newcastle St (cnr Schutt St)



Recreational facilities and reserves

In total, there are 12 areas of open space in Newport West, although several of them are small parcels of land that separate roads or skirt the rail line. The remainder provide both formal and informal recreational opportunities for the neighbourhood's residents.

By far the largest open space is Newport Lakes Park. As mentioned earlier, the lakes were developed on a former quarry and are set within larger open space which includes walking paths, picnic shelters and toilets, a barbeque area and two play grounds.

Brian Martyn Oval includes a cricket oval, a pavilion that has recently been upgraded, together with a netball court and playground.

Loft Reserve has two turf and synthetic ovals and associated sports pavilions that are used for cricket in summer and rugby league football in winter. The reserve also has a playground and a ½ court for basketball.

In addition there are playgrounds in Ducrow, Leo Hoffman and Paine Reserves.

The Council is currently developing a playground strategy which will outline future works to be undertaken in Newport West.

NEWPORT WEST PUBLIC OPEN SPACES



Cultural Activities

Newport Folk and Fiddle Club

Among the events run by the club are a monthly Club Night (an informal occasion for singing, playing, or just listening), a monthly Open Stage night, acoustic concerts, a Bush Orchestra, Community Choir, annual Folk Festival, dances and workshops.

Eid

Followers of the Muslim faith celebrate Eid twice a year at the Newport mosque in Mason Street. These two festivals include:

- Eid-UI-Adha - the Festival of Pilgrimage and marks the end of the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Eid-UI-Fitr - marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan. The festival is sometimes referred to as the 'Festival of Fast-Breaking'.

The Substation

As mentioned earlier in the document (refer to Community facilities), the Substation is an important cultural hub for many cultural activities.

Retail Centres

Newport West has several retail activity centres. The main centre is at the eastern end of Mason Street which extends into Melbourne Road. There is also a small strip shopping centre in Challis Street, on the south side of Woods Street.

The Mason Street shopping centre includes a broad mix of shops and services including several small supermarkets, green grocers, butchers and bakers, cafes and takeaways, a hotel and a packaged liquor outlet. Among the services provided are hairdressers, a pharmacy, counselling and legal services and a garage. The electoral offices of the Senator for Melbourne's west are also located here.



Mason Street shopping centre

The shopping strip in Melbourne Road includes Centrelink offices, a takeaway shop, furniture stores, video hire, health services, a bike shop and a garage.

The small strip of shops in Challis Street consists of a milk bar, combined post office and newsagent and a packaged liquor outlet. The centre also has a medical practice, health services, hairdresser and beautician. Also based in Challis Street are the offices of the Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative (WRHC) which is a Registered Housing Provider. The Co-op currently manages 36 properties in Hobsons Bay that are owned by the Department of Human Services - Office of Housing.

Doctors

There are two medical clinics in Newport West.

- Mason Street Medical Centre
50 Mason Street, Newport
- Challis Street Medical Centre
37 Challis Street, Newport

Dentists

Newport West has one dental surgery

- Newport Dental Surgery
32 Mason Street, Newport

Local Newspapers

There are three local newspapers that are delivered across the municipality: the Hobsons Bay Weekly, The Star and the Leader.

Public Transport

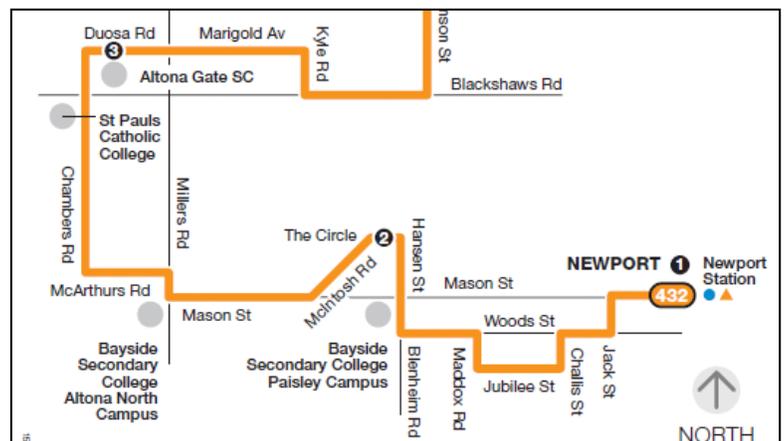
Rail

The Newport Railway Station is located at the junction on Melbourne Road and Mason Street. The line runs from the Melbourne CBD to Newport where the line splits. From here, trains run south to Williamstown and west to Werribee and Geelong.

Bus services

There are three bus routes that service the Newport West neighbourhood and a bus interchange is based in the Mason Street shopping precinct.

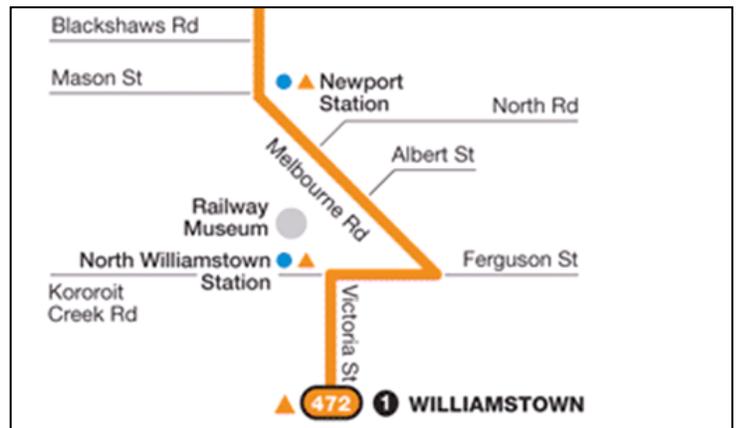
Route 432: Newport to Yarraville
Departs from the bus interchange in Mason Street and runs via The Circle and Altona Gate shopping centres to the Yarraville Railway Station.





Route 471: Williamstown –Sunshine (via Newport)
 From Williamstown, the bus stops at the Newport bus interchange, then via The Circle, Altona Gate shopping centres before reaching its destination at the Sunshine Railway Station terminus.

Route 472 Moonee Ponds – Williamstown (via Footscray): the bus service departs Victoria Street, Williamstown and runs through Newport via Melbourne Road, then on to the Footscray Railway Station before reaching its destination at the Moonee Ponds Bus Terminal in Mt Alexander Road.





What's Ahead for Newport West

Planning

Newport Activity Centre Structure Plan Review

The Council is currently reviewing the Newport Activity Centre Structure plan. The activity centre incorporates the railway station and the nearby shopping precincts at Mason Street/Melbourne Road, Hall Street and Melbourne Road (south of North Road). The plan will guide the major changes to land use, transport, the built form and public spaces. It will also look at opportunities to improve the linkages between Newport West and other parts of the activity centre.

Car Parking Review

The Council is developing a parking strategy for the municipality. As part of this, the strategy will consider parking issues around Mason Street and the Substation.

Newport Four Mill

The Council has received a proposal from the owners of the mill for a rezoning to a mixed use, with the intention to redevelop the site to include residential development. The outcome is yet to be determined

Recreation

The Council has developed a Play Space strategy for adoption by Council in 2012. The strategy will earmark the playgrounds in Newport West for future improvement or upgrade.

A future upgrade of Paine Reserve will be aligned with the development of a master plan (refer to information in Capital works).

In 2012/13, work will be undertaken at Kohry Reserve to improve the presentation of the park, including the installation of park furniture, and linkages to the railway station.

The remediation of contamination at Jack Madigan reserve will commence in 2012. The work is expected to take up to five years to complete and will then be returned to public open space.



Capital works

The Council is preparing plans for a community facility in Paine Reserve on Mason Street that will incorporate the Newport library, community hall and senior citizens facilities, as well as the restoration of the Mechanics Hall. A master plan for Paine Reserve will also be completed. Council will be reviewing the service needs of local residents in order to determine the most appropriate mix of services to be delivered from this re-developed community facility.

A new early years learning centre will be developed on land at the Newport Gardens Primary School. The plans for the co-located centre include Maternal and Child Health, childcare, specialist early years services provision and kindergarten services. The centre is expected to open in 2014.

Road works in Percy Street (between Bruce and Graham Streets) are scheduled for 2012/2013.

References

1. Hobsons Bay City Council, 2003, Hobsons Bay Heritage Study: Thematic Environmental History http://www.hobsons.vic.gov.au/Files/Volume_1b_Thematic_Environmental_History.pdf
2. Clarke, I, 2001, The Yalukit-willam: The First People of the City of Hobsons Bay, Australia Council for the Arts
3. Hobsons Bay City Council, 2003. op cit,
4. Friends of Newport Lakes, http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fonl/history/1850_1899.html
5. Hobsons Bay City Council, 2003, op cit
6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newport_Workshops
7. Victorian Heritage Database http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/result_detail/15110?print=true , State Government of Victoria
8. Hobsons Bay City Council, http://libraries.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Page/Page.asp?Page_Id=258&h=1
9. Victorian Heritage Database, op cit
- 10a. Hobsons Bay City Council, 2003, op cit
 - b. Hobsons Bay Neighbourhood Character: Precinct Six