

# Spotswood and South Kingsville

## Neighbourhood Profile



**Hobsons Bay**  
CITY COUNCIL

# Spotswood and South Kingsville Neighbourhood Past, Current and Future Development





## A. Introduction

The Spotswood and South Kingsville neighbourhood is bounded by New Street to the west and the Yarra River to the east. The north boundary is shared with the City of Maribyrnong. Starting at the western end, it skirts the Westgate Freeway and Stony Creek before heading north into Hyde Street and then east into Francis Street. The southern boundary is formed by Blackshaws Road (starting at New Street); on reaching Melbourne Road, it then follows a line between Burleigh and High Streets.

Prior to council amalgamations in the mid 1990s, a section of South Kingsville was part of the former City of Footscray.

## B. History and Development

### Aboriginal History

Two large Aboriginal groups lived on the land surrounding Port Phillip Bay, prior to European settlement; the Bunerong and the Woiworung who were a part of the Kulin nation. Within these groups were sub-groups or clans, made up of 10-30 families. They were hunters and gatherers; some moved camp according to the availability of food while others settled in one location if they had access to reliable food sources.

There were two clans living in the Hobsons Bay area. One was the Yalukit-willam, who lived along a 5 kilometre wide strip at the top of Port Phillip Bay, which included Footscray and further on to Williamstown. The Yalukit-willam was part of the Bunerong tribe. The other was the Marin-balluk (part of the Woiworung) who lived in an area near Stony Creek and extending north as far as Sunbury. The areas along creek and around the Stony Creek Backwash were important sources of food such as eels, yabbies, fish and water birds.<sup>1</sup>

### European Settlement

Development in Spotswood and South Kingsville began around the mid 1800s. In the 1840s, John Stewart Spotswood purchased 119 acres and began a dairy farm. Soon after, Spotswood was responsible for starting up a punt service across the Yarra, near the mouth of Stony Creek. The Birmingham Estate, which comprised a large portion of what is now South Kingsville, was subdivided in the 1880s.

In the early years, bluestone played an important role in the neighbourhood's livelihood. Bluestone was quarried along the Stony Creek to construct buildings and bridges, paving for roads and for ships' ballast.

Spotswood Railway Station opened in 1878. Originally called Edom, the station was on the Williamstown rail line which began operating in the late 1850s. Edom Station was subsequently renamed Spottiswoode before finally becoming Spotswood station in 1905.



Source: National Archives of Australia, Boy selling newspapers to the crew of locomotive, C15, at Spotswood, Victoria, ca. 1950]

Proximity to the rail line, and the port, resulted in a large number of rail related industries setting up in Spotswood and nearby Newport. One such business was the Semaphore Iron Works which was established in Spotswood 1878 and manufactured railway signals and equipment for the Victorian network. It was later known as McKenzie and Holland and part of the building still exists in Stephenson and Sutton Streets, South Kingsville. Railway workshops in Newport were completed in 1889 and were the largest industrial business in Victoria and a major employer of the neighbourhood's residents.



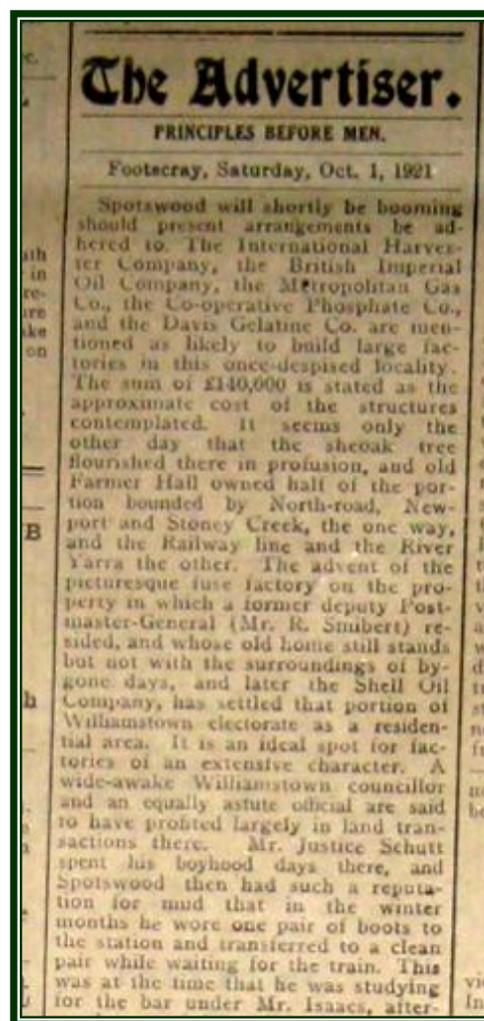
Image courtesy of Warren Judd <sup>2</sup>

Also in 1889, the Victorian Export Canning Works opened on the east side of the railway line, manufacturing margarine and tinned meats for export to Great Britain. A year later, the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works relocated from South Melbourne, eventually employing up to 500 men. (The business is still operating at Spotswood as part of O-I Asia Pacific.)

The Spotswood Pumping Station opened in 1897. The pumping station was central to Melbourne's new sewerage system and pumped to the main sewer outfall near Millers Road at Brooklyn. It closed in 1965 when the Brooklyn Pumping Station was completed. The building has been classified by the National Trust of Australia and now forms part of Museum Victoria's Scienceworks complex.

Industrial activity continued to expand between the two world wars. The Amalgamated (railway) Workshops were built in the 1920s. Commonwealth Oil Refineries, which was Australia's first oil refinery and located on Kororoit Creek, installed a pipeline to storage tanks at Spotswood.

Residential development began appearing in the late 1800s. (There are remnants of housing from this period, particularly in streets on the east side of Melbourne Road and north of McLister Street.) After World War I, the Department of Repatriation built around 250 war service homes in Spotswood for ex-servicemen. However, it was not until after the Second World War that housing development in the neighbourhood gained momentum. During the 1950s, many migrants came to live and work in the neighbourhood.



Source: Footscray Historical Society

As the population increased, an adjunct school (of Williamstown Primary School) opened in a community hall in Robert Street in 1910. Spotswood Primary School relocated to its current site in Melbourne Road, following the construction of permanent school buildings, in 1914.<sup>3</sup>

Sometime later in 1954, St Margaret Mary's School was established in response to the neighbourhood's growing population of new migrants.<sup>4</sup>



Source: State Library Victoria, Spotswood State School (1940?)

## C. The Current Environment

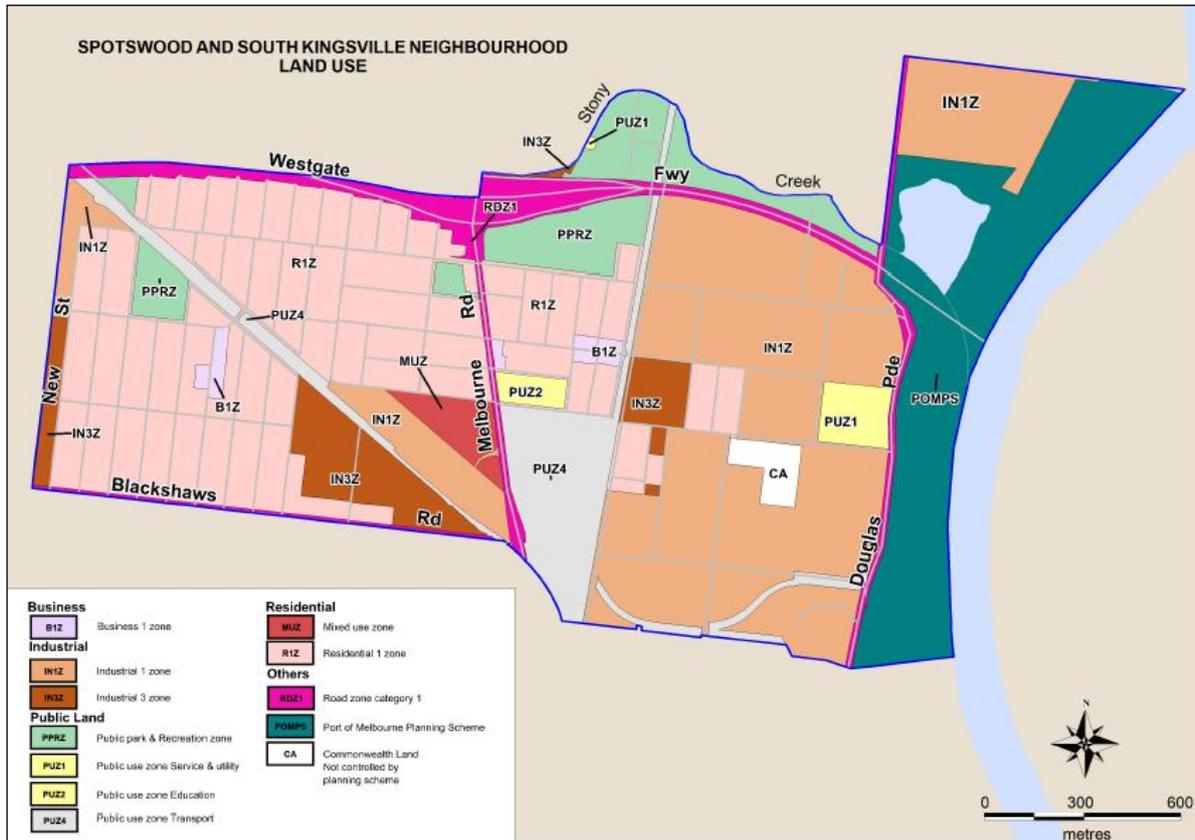
### Land uses

The land uses in the Spotswood and South Kingsville neighbourhood are predominantly residential and industrial, with most of the industrial zones (IN1Z and IN3Z) located on the east side of the passenger rail line (PUZ4) and residential zones (R1Z) to the west of the line (refer to map below).

A slice of land designated for industrial use (INI1) cuts diagonally through the western side of the neighbourhood and is used for the freight line and the Pacific National workshops, an important national facility for locomotive maintenance.

Parts of industrial land (IN3Z) at the junction of Blackshaws Road and the freight line are used for industrial purposes. However this land, in conjunction with mixed use land (MUZ) on the north side of the freight line, has been identified as a potential site for residential redevelopment in the Council's Industrial Land Management Strategy (ILMS), 2008.

The map below also shows several Public Use Zones (PUZ1&2) where the Spotswood Primary School and Scienceworks Museum are located. In addition, there are several business zones which provide for strip shopping centres. The other main land use is public parks and recreation spaces (PPRZ). Most of these spaces are located to the east, on land near the Westgate Freeway.



### Natural features

The Stony Creek Backwash is located at the north east corner of the neighbourhood, on the north side of the Westgate Bridge. It marks the point at which Stony Creek joins up with the Yarra River, before flowing into Hobsons Bay.

“The original form of the backwash has been dramatically altered and its size reduced by the realignment of the [Yarra] river, the construction of a causeway to carry Hyde Street through to Spotswood, filling of the sections west of Hyde St and on the northern edge and the creation of an embankment between the river and backwash for a railway siding. The construction of the West Gate Bridge has further altered the local landscape with the diversion of a section of the [Stony] creek, the creation of landfill on the south side of the creek, filling old ballast quarries and filling near the bank of the Yarra to provide access to the bridge pylons.”<sup>5</sup>



Photo Source: Alarna Gray © Stony Creek and Westgate Bridge<sup>7</sup>

While much has changed at the backwash, there is a rare stand of White Mangroves (*Avicennia marina*) that was replanted after it was destroyed by an oil spill in the early 1980s. Many waterbirds feed and nest amongst the mangroves, including the Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*) and the Great Egret (*Ardea intermedia*) which is a threatened species.<sup>6</sup>

## Local landmarks

### *Westgate Bridge*

The Westgate freeway and bridge, which opened in 1978, are a dominant physical presence along the neighbourhood's northern boundary. The history of the bridge is marked by tragedy. In 1970, while the bridge was being constructed, a large span collapsed, killing thirty-five workers. A memorial near the Stony Creek Backwash has been erected.

The bridge is a major transport route linking the western suburbs to central Melbourne and beyond. Due to the high numbers of vehicles that use the bridge daily, new lanes are currently being constructed to increase its carrying capacity.<sup>8</sup>



### *Scienceworks and the Melbourne Planetarium*

Scienceworks comes under the umbrella of Museum Victoria and has a science and technology orientation. Along with the Melbourne Planetarium, it is located on the site of the



former Spotswood pumping station. As mentioned earlier the Pumping Station, built in the late nineteenth century, was part of Melbourne's first sewerage system and is an important industrial heritage site.

Scienceworks off provides visitors of all ages, particularly children, to actively engage in the exhibits while the planetarium has a simulated display of the night sky and information about the stars and planets.

## Residential development

The neighbourhood's residential areas are shaped by a number of physical barriers, creating a number of small, separate areas. Firstly, busy Melbourne Road cuts the neighbourhood in half and is a major link to the Westgate Freeway and Bridge. The area to the east of Melbourne Road is divided by the passenger train line to the Melbourne CBD. In effect, the line separates the residential area from industry. To the west of Melbourne Road, a freight line divides South Kingsville and Spotswood.

Residential development in the neighbourhood incorporates a mix of periods. The Spotswood residential heritage precinct is identified in the Hobsons Bay Heritage Study (2006) and



includes streets bounded by Melbourne Road, Hudson Road, the railway line and The Avenue. Within this precinct, there are examples of housing that were constructed between “1890-1915 (Victorian cottage and villas and Edwardian bungalows), interspersed with some inter-war housing”.<sup>9</sup>



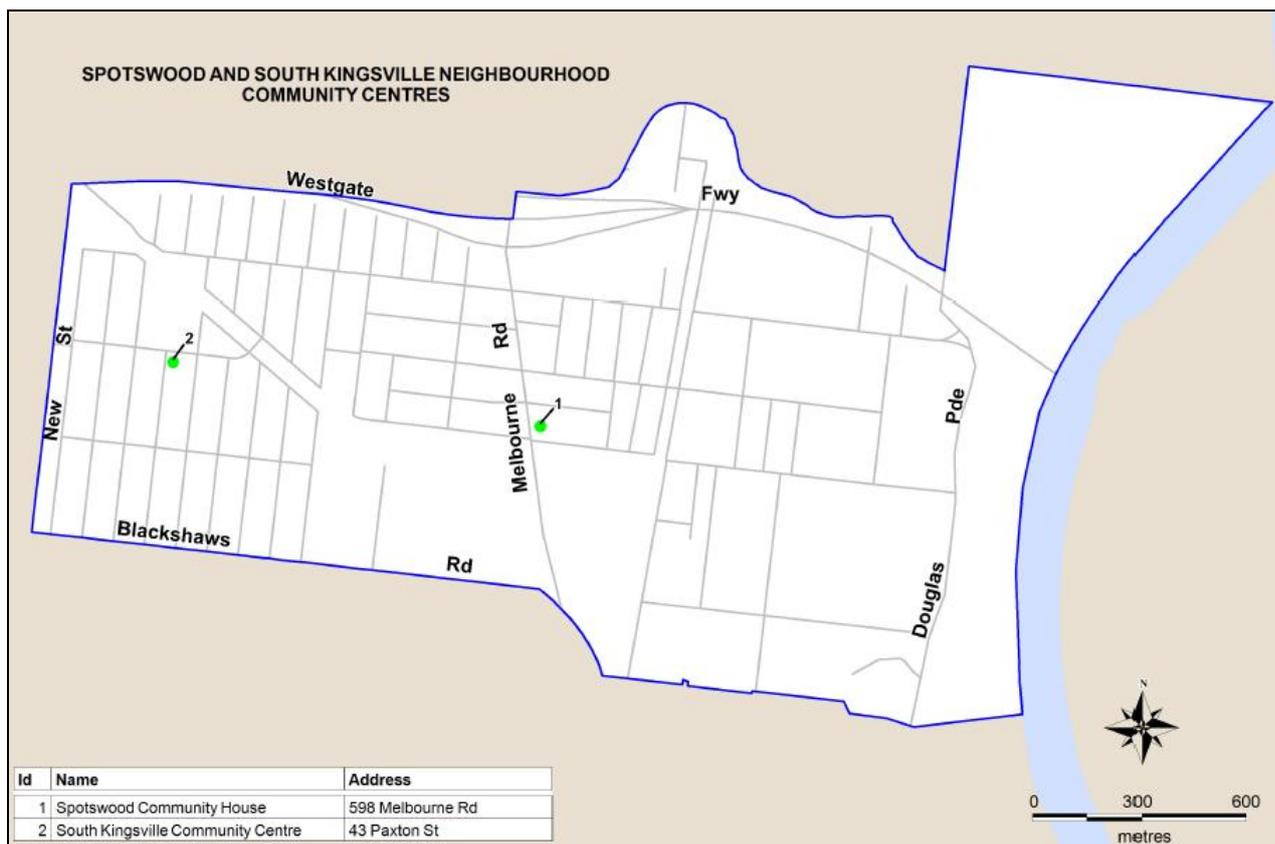
To the west of Melbourne Road, the house styles are varied. Brick and weatherboard housing built between the 1940s and 60s is common. Among the more recent infill development, there is an increasing amount of medium density housing, mostly townhouses.

### **Community Centres**

The South Kingsville Community Centre is based in Paxton Street. The building is owned by the Hobsons Bay City Council and the centre is managed by a volunteer Committee of Management. Facilities at the centre include a large hall, conference area, dedicated information technology room and small meeting rooms which can be hired.

Services and programs at the centre include maternal and child health, a kindergarten, occasional childcare and a playgroup; senior citizens activities and volunteer support for people who are frail or have a disability; employment, social, educational and recreational programs; and information and referral services.

The Spotswood Community House is located on Melbourne Road. The community house provides a venue for local community and support groups and also offers a range of craft and leisure classes, fitness and wellbeing classes, activities for children as well as Men's Shed activities.



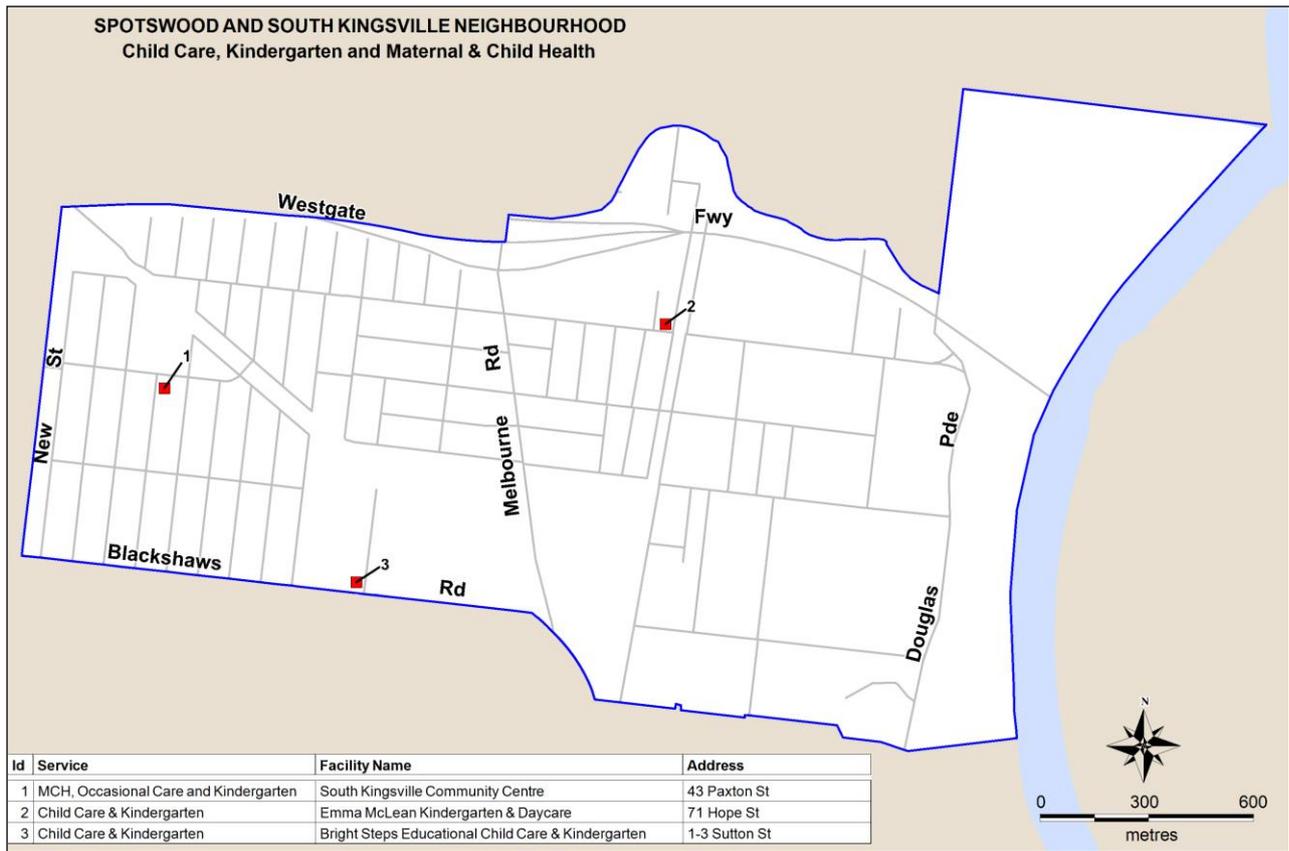
### Children’s services

There are three facilities in the neighbourhood which offer a range of children’s services.

As mentioned, the South Kingsville Community Centre, in Paxton Street, South Kingsville, provides services and programs for infants and young children. Maternal and child health nurses are at the centre on Mondays and Wednesdays. Ten sessions of Occasional Care are offered per week, during school terms. Three and four year old kindergarten programs are also available.

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare Inc. is located on the corner of Hope Street and The Avenue, Spotswood. Current programs include three and four year old kinder, together with occasional and long day care. The centre is community managed and the facility is Council owned.

Bright Steps Educational Childcare and Kindergarten is a private centre that provides long day care and kindergarten sessions for three and four year olds. The centre is on the corner of Blackshaws Road and Sutton Street, South Kingsville.

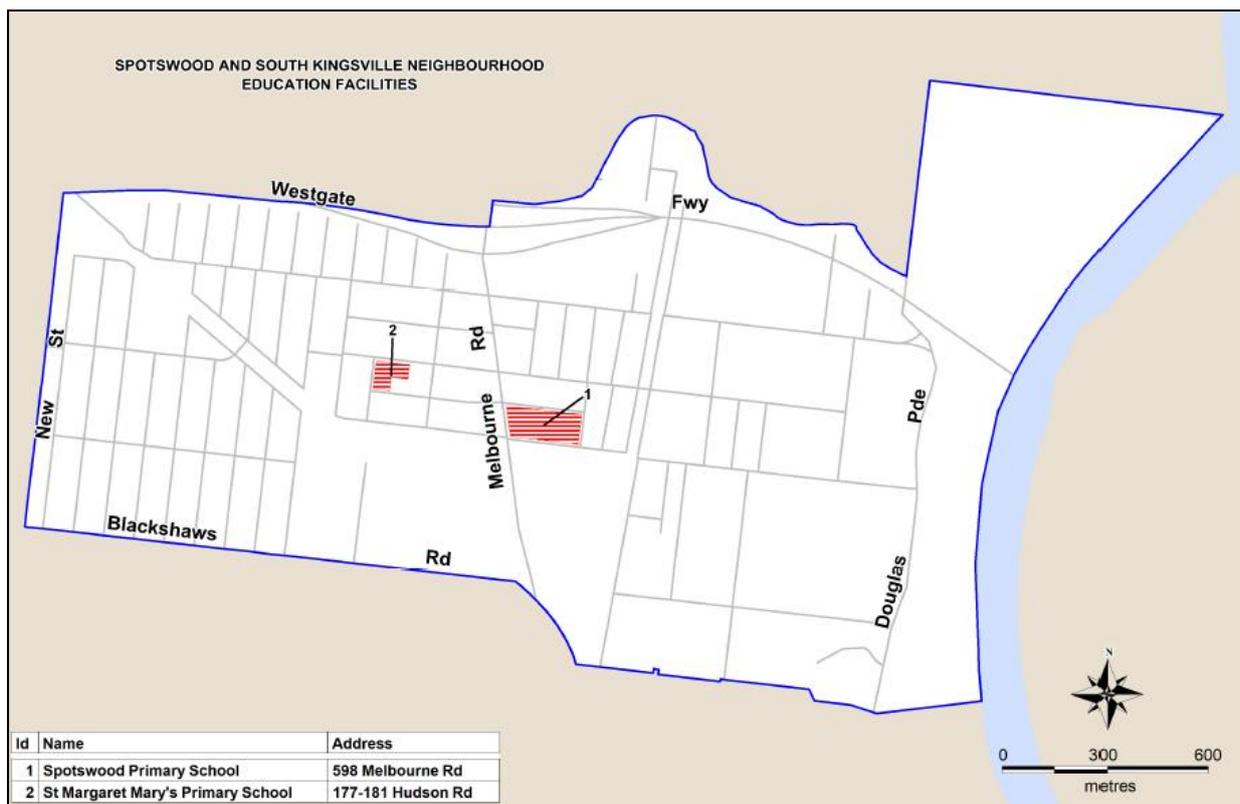


## Schools

There are two primary schools in the Spotswood and South Kingsville neighbourhood. The Spotswood Primary School is located in Melbourne Road, Spotswood. As mentioned earlier, the school first opened in Robert Street before moving to its current site and is celebrating its centenary in 2010.

St. Margaret Mary's school is located in Hudson Road, Spotswood. The school commenced operations in 1954.

The neighbourhood does not have a local secondary school. The nearest government schools are the Bayside junior campus in Millers Road, Altona North; the senior campus is in Blenheim Road, Newport.



### Recreational facilities and reserves

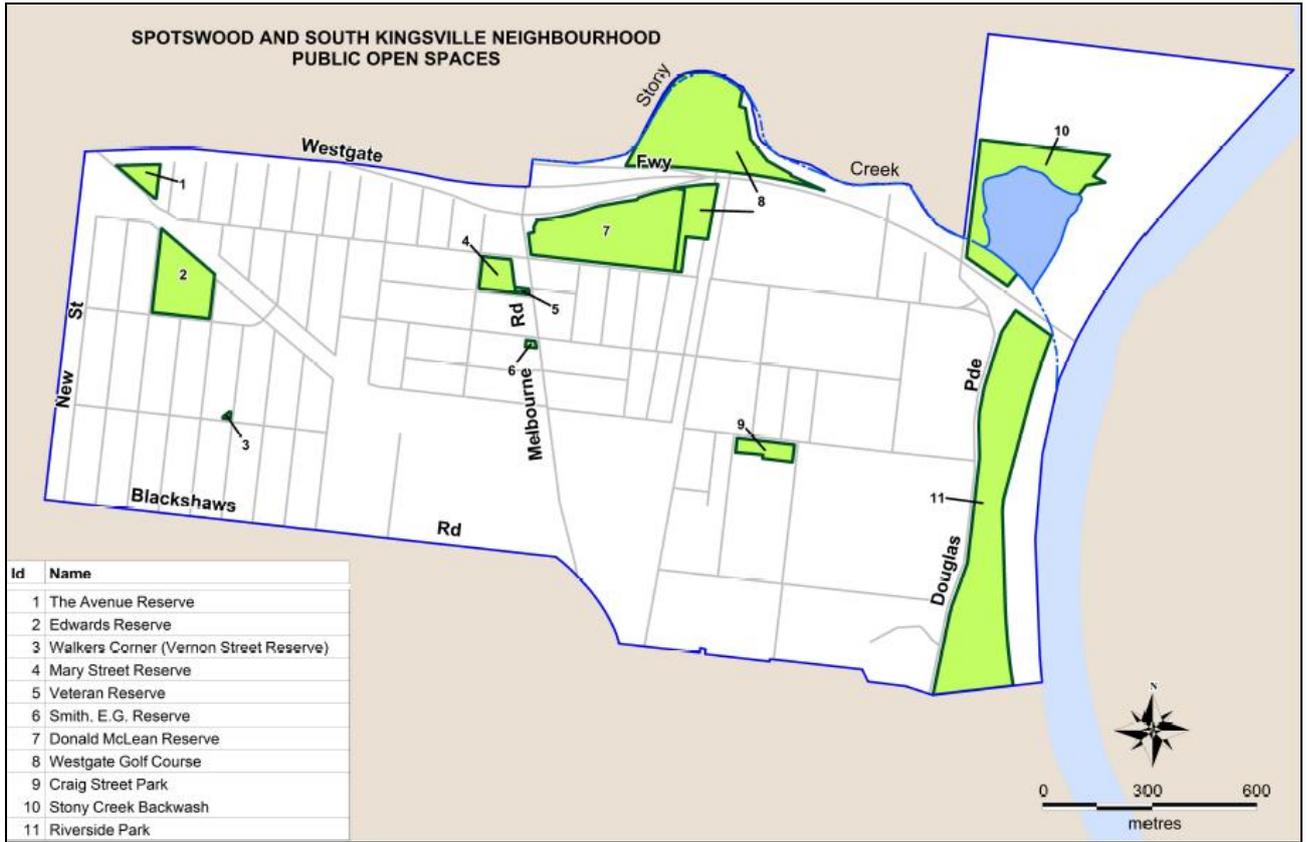
The main sporting spaces in Spotswood and South Kingsville are the Westgate Golf Club, Donald McLean Reserve and Edwards Reserve.

The Donald McLean Reserve, in The Avenue Spotswood, has two sporting ovals that are used for both cricket and football, together with cricket nets and club rooms. In addition, there are two plexipave tennis courts and a children's playground.

The Westgate golf course, adjacent to McLean Reserve, is a nine hole public course that sits across both the Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong municipalities. The course extends under the Westgate Freeway to Stony Creek where a footbridge provides access to the Maribyrnong fairways.

Edwards Reserve in Brunel Street, South Kingsville, has one oval that is used for soccer and cricket. The reserve also has clubrooms, cricket nets, a basketball key and a children's playground.

In addition to these larger spaces, there is a basketball half-court and children's playground in the Mary Street Reserve and a children's playground in Edwards Street Reserve.



### Retail Centres

The neighbourhood has several local shopping strips. The main centres are in Vernon Street, South Kingsville and Hudson Road, Spotswood, along with a small group of shops in Melbourne Road.



Vernon Street has a range of shops including a mixed grocery, the Westgate Health Co-op, a pharmacy, several cafes and hairdressers, a laundrette and a gallery.

The Hudson Road shopping centre is located close to the railway station. Among the shops are a supermarket, newsagent, cafes and takeaway food shops and Westgate Health Support Services. There is also a small number of other service providers.

Four art works have recently been installed at the Hudson Street precinct. The 'Sciencewalk to Scienceworks' project was a joint initiative of the Council, Scienceworks and the Department of Transport. It is designed to visually improve the pedestrian experience and help visitors to navigate their way between the railway station and Scienceworks.

## Doctors

There are two medical clinics located in the neighbourhood.

Westgate Health Co-op Ltd 19 Vernon Street South Kingsville	Dr Voola Fourlanos Medical Clinic 603 Melbourne Road Spotswood
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## Dentists

There is one dental practice operating at the Westgate Health Co-op in Vernon Street, South Kingsville

## Pharmacies

The neighbourhood has one pharmacy in South Kingsville (Scown's Pharmacy) which is located at 17D Vernon Street, Kingsville South.

## Local Newspapers

There are three local newspapers distributed in the Spotswood and South Kingsville neighbourhood – The Hobsons Bay Weekly, The Star and The Leader.

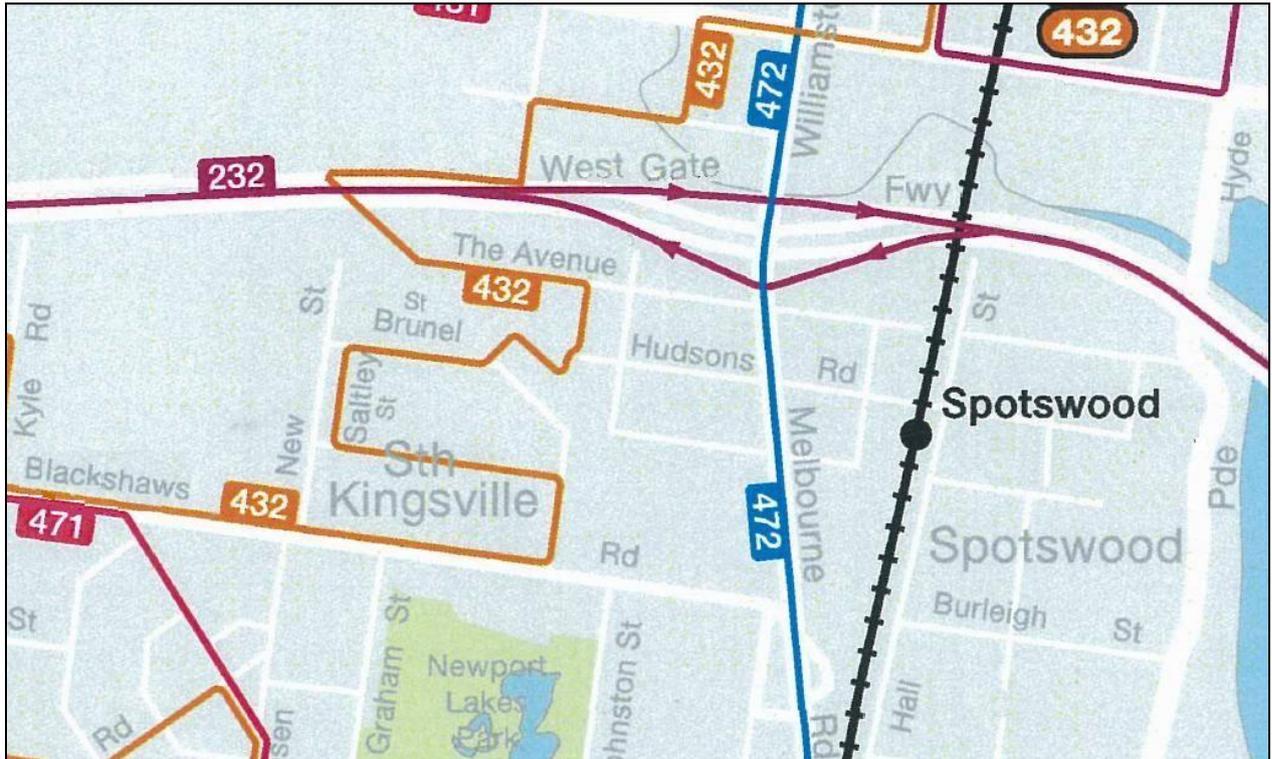
## Public Transport

Residents in Spotswood and South Kingsville have access to the bus and rail network (see map below). Spotswood Railway Station is located at Hudson Road and passenger trains run to the Melbourne CBD and to Williamstown and Werribee.

The main bus routes are:

- 232 bus: runs along the Westgate freeway, starting at Altona North and running through the CBD before reaching Queen Victoria Market. The bus stops at the freeway off and on ramps at the Williamstown/Melbourne Road junction.
- 432 bus: runs between the Yarraville and Newport railway stations. On route, it passes through Spotswood and South Kingsville and also stops at Altona Gate shopping centre.
- 472 bus: starts at Williamstown Beach and runs through Williamstown shopping centre, Newport and Spotswood and then via Footscray and Ascot Vale before reaching Moonee Ponds.

The 471 bus follows a route that falls just outside the neighbourhood boundary. It runs between Williamstown Beach and Sunshine, via Newport and Altona North. The closest stop to the neighbourhood is at the corner of The Broadway and Blackshaws Road in Altona North.



## D. What's Ahead for Spotswood and South Kingsville

### Residential, commercial and industrial development

- A new development is proposed at the corner of Melbourne Road and McLister Street (refer to Site A on the map below). The application includes a mix of residential and retail uses.
- A proposal to rezone land bounded by Blackshaws Road, Sutton Street and the freight line (Site B) for residential use is currently with the Council. Housing estimates for the site suggest approximately 155 new dwellings. Adjacent land, bounded by Blackshaws Road and Stephenson and Sutton Streets (Site C), could potentially deliver a similar number of dwellings, subject to rezoning of the land.
- An area on the east side of Melbourne Road (Site D) has received planning approval to be used as an inland port (freight interchange) and is currently being developed.



### **Recreation**

Preliminary investigations into the feasibility of developing a new recreational space at Riverside Park have commenced. The area is located at the south east corner of the neighbourhood and extends south into Newport. If developed, the park will provide active and recreational spaces.

The extension of the Federation Trail has received VicRoads funding; the trail sits between Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong municipalities. Commencing at Millers Road, Brooklyn, the route of the shared trail heads east along the edge of Spotswood and South Kingsville, following the Westgate Freeway and parts of Stony Creek. Construction has started and a number of crossings will link the trail to Hobsons Bay. Work on the extension is expected to be completed towards the end of 2010.

Proposed works at McLean Reserve, Spotswood are to upgrade the playground, barbeque and picnic area and the toilets at the western end of the reserve. The toilet block, near the football oval, will be closed.

A proposal to realign truck routes off the Westgate Freeway may have an impact will have an impact on the northern boundary of McLean Reserve. The Council will continue to liaise with VicRoads to minimize this impact.

The playground in Edward Reserve, South Kingsville is scheduled to be renewed in 2011-2012 and will improve access.

### **Street and traffic works**

Through the Council's 'Vibrant Villages' initiative, improvements are planned for the Vernon Street shopping precinct in South Kingsville.

Traffic signals are planned for the intersection of The Avenue & Melbourne Rd. This is a major traffic black spot and the work is funded by VicRoads.



A proposal to realign truck routes on the Western Freeway may have an impact on the northern boundary of McLean Reserve and the Council will continue to liaise with VicRoads to minimize this impact.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Hobsons Bay City Council webpage  
[http://libraries.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page\\_Id=246&h=0#BM364](http://libraries.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=246&h=0#BM364)
- <sup>2</sup> Image supplied by Mr Warren Judd, a long time resident of the neighbourhood
- <sup>3</sup> Information provided by Helen Penrose, local historian and author of a publication marking the Spotswood Primary School centenary.
- <sup>4</sup> Hobsons Bay Heritage Study: Thematic Environmental History (2003)  
[http://www.hobsons.vic.gov.au/Files/Volume\\_1b\\_Thematic\\_Environmental\\_History.pdf](http://www.hobsons.vic.gov.au/Files/Volume_1b_Thematic_Environmental_History.pdf)
- <sup>5</sup> Vines G, 1992, Industrial Land and Wetlands
- <sup>6</sup> [http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1park\\_display.cfm?park=249](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1park_display.cfm?park=249)
- <sup>7</sup> Photo of The Backwash and Westgate Bridge courtesy and Alarna Gray ©
- <sup>8</sup> <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/exhibs/westgate/disaster.htm>
- <sup>9</sup> Hobsons Bay Heritage Study 2006  
<http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/page/heritage.asp>

## Acknowledgement

Hobsons Bay City Council would like to thank Warren Judd, Helen Penrose, Alarna Gray and members of the Footscray Historical Society for the information and support they provided.