HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

HOBSONS BAY WETLANDS CENTRE

"A place for everyone to connect with nature, improve health and wellbeing and be inspired to care for our precious natural environment"

— HOBSONS BAY WETLANDS CENTRE INC VISION

PROJECT COST: APPROX. $16 MILLION

The-state-of-the-art, sustainability-focused Wetlands Centre will be a premier destination for immersive teaching and learning from Prep to PhD, leading environmental research facilities, eco-tourism and community participation in nature, leading to improved physical and mental health outcomes.

An Australian first in biophilic and community co-design architectural principles, the Wetlands Centre will be located at HD Graham Reserve in Altona Meadows, near internationally recognised Ramsar-listed Cheetham Wetlands and other biodiversity hotspots that contribute significantly to social, cultural, economic and environmental values in Victoria.

The multifunctional centre will include: indoor/outdoor public spaces; classrooms, field studies centre, café, offices, work spaces, connected walking trails, wetlands, boardwalks, interpretive signage, landscaping, seating, nature play areas; and storage.

Council, Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc, and all project partners invite funding partnerships with the Victorian and Australian Governments to be part of this regional flagship wellbeing and environmental centre for all.

PROJECT TIMELINE

MID 2019 — HD Graham Master Plan endorsed by Council

MID 2020 — Feasibility Study completed

MID 2021 — Centre architects appointed by Council (project manager)

MID 2021 — Traditional Owners engagement

LATE 2021 — Centre concept plans developed

LATE 2021 / EARLY 2022 — Partnership/ funding discussions with government, corporations and philanthropic trusts

2022 — Community engagement

EARLY 2023 — Centre detailed design development

LATE 2023 — Construction commences

2024 — Estimated centre opening

BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Economic:

- Activate one of Melbourne's premier coastal areas to increase the region's ecotourism
- Stimulate urban outdoor recreation and associated local business activity, contributing to pandemic related recovery
- Create approx. 40+ full time jobs through design and construction, plus local sourcing of material where possible
- Increase community volunteerism

Environment:

- Foster community-led efforts and Citizen Science to protect the internationally significant wetlands
- Develop partnerships with Indigenous and international coastal communities through the implementation of collaborative biodiversity and conservation strategies
- Support cutting edge research on blue carbon solutions in wetlands to mitigate climate change
- Environmentally Sensitive Design (ESD) and biophilic features in the centre's design

Health & Wellbeing:

- Greater use of bike paths and walking trails, increasing people's outdoor exercise leading to clear physical and mental health benefits
- Access for all abilities through purposefully designed trails, seating and access points, enabling more people to exercise in nature
- Build on innovative 'green prescriptions' research and use

Education:

- Provide community-wide access to a unique environmental science space and learning experience
- Enable long-term educational and wellbeing benefits for young children, through Nature for Children and bush kinder
- Raise awareness of STEM career pathways through 'Teaching Wetlands' and 'Learning Laboratories'
- World-class coastal marine and climate related research for tertiary students and academic researchers

PARTNERSHIPS

Progress of the centre development is based on key collaborative partnerships:

- An MOU based partnership between Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc, Council, Deakin University, Melbourne Water, Greater Western Water, Ecolinc, Cirqit Health, Birdlife Australia
- Education/environmental/health sectors, LeadWest, Traditional Owners
- State and federal government Ministers and Members of Parliament (MP's)

ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN

The Advocacy Action Plan for the Wetlands Centre includes:

- Meetings and engagement with state and federal government Ministers, MP's and department representatives
- Publicity across traditional and digital channels
- Call to action for community i.e. 'add your voice' campaign
- Regional community engagement and public events presence
- Funding and grant submissions

GOVERNMENT POLICY CONNECTIONS

The Wetlands Centre connects with the below policies and strategies:

- Victorian Government's Plan Melbourne 2017-50
- Victorian Government's Infrastructure Victoria Strategy 2021-51 recommendations
- Victorian Government's Climate Change Strategy and the Marine and Coastal Policy
- Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28
- North and West Melbourne City Deal proposed to federal and state governments

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Progression of the Wetlands Centre is underpinned by Council's commitments including:

- Council Plan 2021-25 commitment
- Council Budget allocation
- Climate Change Policy, Community Greenhouse Strategy 2013-30, Environmentally Sustainable Development Policy Statement

HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL
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