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Subject Open Space submissions/VEAC

Hello

My wife and I have now been in Melbourne for 16 or so months after re-locating from Brisbane due to my promotion with my employer.

We moved with some trepidation having grown to very much like Brisbane and Queensland in general. However we have been surprised by life in Melbourne (we live in Essendon).

Some of the qualities that you may take for granted here but which do not occur further north are:

Easily accessible and large dog friendly areas such as Royal Park and Aberfeldie Park. In fact the whole dog friendliness of Melbourne is a big attraction to us, Brisbane's "lead free" areas are generally small fenced spaces which actually inhibit dog behaviour rather than let them express it.

The wonderful corridor alongside the Maribyrnong River which supports a whole heap of bird life, we counted 36 species of birds on our Sunday walk for example.

These are both excellent examples of how open space can be used to enhance the quality of human life and also as an added benefit provide habitat for native plants, animals and birds.

Our view is that trees are the single most important object when considering the impact of open space on people. One only has to look at the so called "desirable" suburbs such as Middle Park to see the effect that mature trees have on a space.

So I guess our submission would be continue the good work, use every bit of open space possible for people and native species, make them as user friendly as possible without over sanitising them, continue to install small children's play areas in suitable areas so that parents can have a picnic or bbq whilst keeping an eye on the children. Keep the city as dog friendly as possible whilst keeping some areas dog (and cat) free to protect native wild life.

There are some shining examples of good open space use near where we live. The Maribyrnong walkway in Aberfeldie has got to be the best used public open space in Melbourne perhaps with the exception of the Tan and is used by cyclists, runners, dog walkers and walkers whilst the adjoining park is popular for picnics and bbq's and the kids play area all alongside the river which is used by fishermen, rowers, kayaker and boats. The Afton Street Conservation Park is likewise well used and hosts a great variety of native species all helpfully listed on the information signs.

So for what it is worth that's our contribution.

Dave Boardman
General Manager
Victoria & Tasmania

