



RINGWOOD LAKE

INFORMATION PACK



RINGWOOD LAKE

Ringwood Lake Park is a significant cultural asset valued by the Maroondah community. The lake is a Maroondah City icon and the 8.5 hectare park has been enjoyed by many locals and visitors since it's creation in the 1920's. The significance of the park has been highlighted through the preservation of the local history, pleasant naturally significant surroundings and by hosting annual festivals.

Community groups and individuals have contributed both time and funding towards the Park's preservation, including recent works to enhance the cultural value of the park. These works are a part of the Ringwood Lake Park Masterplan, prepared in 1999 to address an expected increase in the park's use. Site assessments and extensive community consultation were undertaken, including Steering Committee Liaison, Community Questionnaires and Public Displays of Draft Masterplan for comment.

History

Ringwood Lake Park is located at the corner of Maroondah Highway and Mt Dandenong Road next to the Belgrave railway line. The lake is about 1 hectare in size with a shoreline of 1 kilometre and a maximum depth of 4.3 metres. In 1926 the lake was created, with community co-operation, by damming the Sandy Creek which flowed north-westerly to the Mullum Mullum Creek. It was an area of mud, fallen logs and grasses which now provides alternative habitat for wildlife as well as passive recreational opportunities.



Ringwood Lake – 1948

The park and its features have been developed over many years by the local community and Council, including the Historical Society's of Ringwood and Croydon.

Features at the park include:

- Lake and bridge
- Sound shell
- Miner's Cottage and Poppet Head from antimony mining era
- Regional Playground with accessible equipment
- Picnic shelters and barbecues
- Toilet wall murals
- Heritage walking trail
- Bushlands and creek
- Fern gully walkway



Ringwood Lake – 1970's

Community Significance

Recreational Activities undertaken in the park include:

- Picnics
- Social gatherings
- Playing on equipment
- Bike riding
- Walking, running and exercise
- Sight-seeing
- Education
- Photography
- Bird watching
- Yabbing
- Fishing



Ringwood Lake - 1990's

Annual local and national festival events include:

- Concerts over summer

Preservation Works

Works undertaken over the last few years to enhance the park's cultural heritage and aesthetic qualities include:

- re-establishment of a walking bridge over the lake using Australian timber - to ensure stability and public safety;
- revitalisation of the toilet block walls through painting murals representing local native fauna; and
- establishment of local artists' wood carvings of indigenous fauna
- Installation of new playground equipment;
- Regeneration of bushland areas through the use of hand weeding, spot spraying, mulching and the planting of indigenous trees and shrubs.
- Asphalt paths to provide safe routes for park users.



Restored lake bridge - 2000

Community Involvement

Council's efforts in the Park been supported by the contributions of many people, most recently the efforts made by the Friends of Ringwood Lake comprising about 6 core people contributing many hours of volunteer work.

Future

Further works planned to improve the Parks heritage value include:

- Establishing information boards along the heritage walking trail to compliment the walking trail booklets; and
- Erosion stabilisation

Ringwood Lake Park has been conserved and its values enhanced for all to enjoy. Its local cultural and historical heritage value is expected to increase over time with further works planned to protect the park for the enjoyment of current and future generations including regeneration processes throughout the park to conserve indigenous bush land.

HISTORY

The history of the lake is by no means as widely known as it ought to be. When Ringwood broke away from the Shire of Lillydale and became a Borough, the area known as "Sandy Creek" was a dirty, muddy, eroded gully full of rushes, sword grass and fallen logs.

The Borough Engineer of the day suggested to Council that the area could be transformed into a lake if cleaned up and a bank built to hold back water. As is often the case, the main obstacle to going ahead was a shortage of money. The Engineer was, however, an enterprising man. The Board of Works at the time, was engaged on a pipe laying project on the Highway. Their Engineers were looking for a spot to dump surplus filling. This surplus filling was in part an answer to the problem.

The Borough Engineer was determined not to miss the opportunity which the surplus filling provided and accordingly, through the local paper, called for a working bee.

The working bee of 1926 is a story of first rate community co-operation. Orchardists and assorted trades people turned up with horses and threw their weight into the project.

Since that busy working bee, contributions by the public and Council have resulted in the lake and its grounds that we see today.

MANAGEMENT OF THE LAKE

Ringwood Lake as shown above is a man made lake managed by Maroondah City Council. The lake receives predominantly stormwater run off from surrounding suburbs. The lake has a flat bottom with minimal diversity and a maximum depth of 4.5 metres with a water surface area of 1 hectare and a surrounding shoreline of approximately 1 kilometre. An outlet structure in the north-west corner of the lake releases overflow water to Mullum Mullum Creek at times of high input volume.

Water Quality

The water quality of the lake is under constant surveillance to ensure the health and safety of the public and wildlife alike.

Maroondah City Council utilises the expertise of Water testing companies in maintaining and monitoring water quality.

From the test results and information received, Maroondah City Council instigates plans to ensure that the lake's value as a recreational amenity is maintained and enhanced through the development of a water quality and general ecological management strategy.

VEGETATION

About three quarters of the Ringwood Lake Reserve, excluding the lake, has a continuous tree canopy. The dominant "native" tree species is *Eucalyptus Obliqua* (Messmate).

For further vegetation information see the following Appendices:

- Appendix A — Sites of Biological Significance in Maroondah
- Appendix B — Ringwood Lake Management Strategy (Flora & Fauna)
- Appendix B1— Ringwood Lake Management Strategy (Actions)

WILDLIFE

The reserve contains many exhibits of native and introduced fauna species. The more common species you will encounter include:

- Native Ducks (two species)
 - Pacific Black Duck
 - Wood Duck (also known as Maned Geese)
- Birds
Including—Magpie, Currawong, Rosella, Kookaburra, Wren, Miner, Galah, Black Cockatoo, Butcher Bird, Silver Eyes, Little Pied Cormorant and White-Faced Heron
- Insects
Native Bees, Dragon Flies, Water Beetles and Butterflies

- Fish, native and introduced:

Native - Short finned Eel
Big Headed Gudgeon
Golden Perch

Introduced - European Carp
Gold Fish
Roach
Eastern Gambusia
Redfin
Weather Loach

- Turtles
- Yabbies
- Possums (two species)
 - Ringtail
 - Brushtail
- Foxes
- Reptiles - Blue Tongue Lizards, Newts, Skinks
- Nocturnals - Field Mice, Water Rats, Sugar Gliders

FACILITIES

The parkland is maintained by Maroondah City Council and access to the area and facilities is free.

Car parking is available on Maroondah Highway and off Mt Dandenong Road. The area is within 10 minutes walk from Ringwood and East Ringwood Stations.

Major facilities include:

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Playground / play equipment | Barbecues |
| Toilets (includes accessible facilities) | Bush / woodlands |
| Sound Shell | Miners Cottage |
| Poppet Head | Walking/ bicycle paths |
| Lawn areas | Fern gully walkway |
| Bridge and viewing platforms | |

PROBLEMS AND PRESSURES

Popularity and pedestrian circulation has led to numerous pressures and problems that require constant monitoring.

Major problems include:

Erosion:

Pedestrian circulation has focused on the lake's edge and various foreshore landscapes. Unfortunately several parts of the lake are constantly crumbling or have been eroded by heavy use.

Erosion Control:

There are several methods that will be adopted to bring erosion under control. These methods include:

- Vegetation—vegetative edge treatments to be used in areas to restrict access to water.
- Rocks—boulder edges in areas to allow some water access. It serves a double function as a retaining mechanism as well as permitting water edge access.
- Timber boardwalks, - provide unlimited access to water.
- Beaches—sand beach areas provide unlimited access to water.

Other Major Problem Areas:

- Litter
- Vandalism—graffiti, destruction of vegetation, destruction of facilities and stealing facilities
- Dogs—roaming free, noise (barking) dog attacks, dog defecations.

Dogs should be maintained on a leash at all times whilst in park grounds.

Curative action and procedures are carried out as problems are identified.



Ringwood Lake Reserve Museum Miner's Cottage

Maroondah City Council, through the creation of this historical venue, seeks to present to the citizens of Maroondah and its visitors something of Ringwood's unique beginnings.

There is great interest today in finding out the beginnings of our history. People search for letters, photographs and documents from the past. They listen to the stories of older people who share their valuable memories.

Sometimes these stories reveal exciting tales, while others tell only of hard work and bad luck.

Whatever the story, they form part of our cultural heritage.

In 1869, the mineral antimony was discovered. To an area that had been bush, traversed only by timber cutters and paling splitters, now came miners with their few possessions carried either in a wheel-barrow or on their backs.

They were attracted by the opportunity of earning good money, for antimony at the time was fetching eight pounds per ton, and the yields were rich. Also, Ringwood was a relatively short distance to reach for those walking out from Melbourne.

Several mining companies took out leases, but the main ones were:

Ringwood Antimony Company Mine (Boardman's) 1870—1934

Bright's Mine 1871– 1886

Curran's Shaft 1870 – 1876

The miners needed quickly built shelters, using the simplest tools and the timber from the surrounding bush. These huts were all built on the strength of a Miner's Right - a legal permit to dig.

Occupants of the huts held no free title to the land on which their huts stood and there was no permanency. If the diggings failed then the miners moved on leaving the simple structure behind.

This Miner's Cottage is a facsimile of one which stood on land now known as 367 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood. Records show it to be one of the many miners huts built adjacent to the main antimony bearing area—now bounded by Mines Road, Maroondah Highway and Mt Dandenong Road.

When the building on Maroondah Highway was demolished in 1975, the first section of the cottage was found beneath some cladding. In this facsimile, the Ringwood Historical Society has endeavoured to portray the first section as it was found.

DIRT FLOOR - The original floor was dirt. The ground beneath the floor boards was packed hard.

NO STUMPS - Walls had no foundations but sat on the dirt. The floor boards were nailed onto trimmed saplings simply lain straight on the ground.

FRAMEWORK - of the cottage (two front rooms) was constructed of rough unsawn trimmed saplings.

INTERNAL WALLS - were lined with hand split palings and covered with hessian. Later, 1875 English newspapers were pasted onto them to act as wallpapers and other proper wallpapers came later.

THE CEILING was at first simply calico (cotton sheeting) tacked onto the rafters to exclude dust. Later lining boards were added.

NAILS were largely handmade, including some 20 centimetres long.

BRICKS - One of the two chimneys had bricks which were handmade near the cottage site. Local rocks dropped into a hole served as the chimney's foundations.

THE ROOF - was originally a shingle roof and from it rainwater was run into barrels as there was no other water supply. The shingle roof was used for about 20 years and was found intact under the corrugated iron in 1975. When the iron roof was added, the rainwater was run into a well which was dug near the back door and used to store water. The well had a hand pump mounted on the top of the dome.

Extensive research shows fairly conclusively that the first section was built in the period 1873—74 and the first occupant was Mr Henry Moss. In the years 1874—75 and 1875—76, a Mr William King lived there. He left during 1875-76 when Mr John Drury took over. There were then a number of occupants before 1881 when Mr Samuel Atwell moved in. He was followed in 1885 by Mr Samuel Cartlidge, a tilemaker, and then in 1886 by Mr Charles Sherman, a brickmaker. This

Information came from the Lilydale Rate Books. In 1886, the rates for the land were set at 11/-. The second section was added during the occupancy of Mr Charles Sherburn and his large family. Later another detached room was built at the back. In 1909 Mrs Sherburn bought the land at auction for ten pounds. Prior to this purchase and free title the Sherburn family had held it under a Miner's Right for 21 years.

The above is compiled from research notes and information from various sources held in the collection of the Ringwood Historical Society.

An extract from M Burnside's
"Ringwood—short notes on its development 1857—1963"

MINING

In the year 1869, William and James Smith from South Warrandyte, (the name by which Croydon was known in those days) with Pierce Boardman, a eucalyptus distiller from Box Hill, discovered stones showing signs of antimony to the east of Mt Dandenong Road in Ringwood East. On 4 April 1870 in partnership with two others, they applied to the Mines Department for a mining lease for the purpose of digging for antimony.

They had permission to employ at least 20 men, but frequently the number was much higher and there was no lack of applicants for the jobs. The men lived in rough paling huts, hurriedly erected around the min. Between 1869—1896 at least five companies were engaged for varying periods in the area. After almost thirty years of continual operation, the mines became uneconomical. When the shafts reached the level of the Dandenong Creek, water seepage became an expensive problem.

Operating as they were before the era of coal and electricity, the stream for the winches was raised by timber stoked boilers. Wood by the hundreds of tons was burnt and as a result, the land was soon denuded of trees and the fuel had to be carted from ever increasing distances.

The resulting increased operational costs were not matched by increased output and the mine was forced to close.

In 1920 the Ringwood Antimony Gold Company was formed, but after spending five thousand pounds in opening up the mine without locating payable ore, the company ceased to work in 1921. In 1934 the mine was again probed for payable ore, but this company was as unsuccessful as the 1921 venture.

Antimony is used for medicinal purposes for making Britannia ware (pewter) for pigments for paints, type metal in printing, the making of smokeless powder and shell, for anti-friction metal for bearings, for vulcanised rubber, but most extensively as an alloy with lead, to which it parts the necessary stiffness and hardness.

All antimony deposits contain gold in more or less quantity, but the profitable separation of one from the other, and the saving of both was a problem which at the time and under those conditions could not be solved.

The Ringwood lode was worked on and off from the year 1869 until 1896. It varied in width from 6" to 30 feet and can be traced uninterrupted to the coast in a southerly direction and away towards Yarra Glen in a northerly direction. In the upper levels the lode contained little or no gold, but the lower portions contained it in good quantity. The whole of the hill on which the mine was situated is streaked with antimony veins. The main shaft was 372 feet deep. Drives were driven north and south from the main cross cut. Maximum distance north was about 305 feet. The total yield of antimony ore recorded is 2898 tones and its value was stated to be twenty nine thousand pounds.

The principal market for the ore was the nonferrous metal alloy manufacturing company of O.T. Lempriere and Co Ltd. and the chemical manufacturing firm of Victor Leggo Company Ltd.

The shaft was sealed about 1936 in the interest of public safety.

The Maroondah City Council offices and the Karralyka Centre are now located in this area.

Maroondah City Council commissioned DEAW (Aust) Pty Ltd to undertake the Ringwood Lake Master plan in October 1998. The Master plan was commissioned in response to:-

- A perceived increase in the use of Ringwood Lake Park;
- An increasing need to replace and upgrade existing infrastructure;
- An understanding of access difficulties to the Park; and
- A requirement to rehabilitate a large area of land in the east of the Park degraded through lake dredging works.

The objectives of the Master Plan were to

- Provide a clear vision for the park that defines future expenditure and development;
- Provide a plan that balances current and future user needs with the requirements to conserve the natural environment;
- Provide a plan that balances user needs with any proposed developments within the Park;
- Define opportunities for improving recreation, leisure and enjoyment of the Park;
- Consider the appropriateness of commercial developments within the Park;
- Acknowledge the significance of cultural elements within the site;
- Improve access to the Park; and
- Address current issues within the Park.

Site assessment and extensive community consultation were undertaken in order to fulfil these objectives. The consultation consisted of:

Steering committee liaison

Community Questionnaire

Display of the Draft Master Plan and Second Community Questionnaire.

The following significant recommendations were made in order to achieve the vision that:

Ringwood Lake Park is to provide a natural area for passive recreation that provides improved experiences of the existing and proposed natural and water values within the Park. The Park should cater primarily for families with children but offer experiences that can be enjoyed by a wide range of user groups. The Park should be easily and safely accessible to all users.

- Improve the natural environment within the Park and increase the experiences of the natural environment through establishing boardwalks and nature trails.
- Improve parking and access within and to the Park through establishing a new carpark along the boundary of Daiseys Hotel and establishing a pedestrian bridge over the Maroondah Highway.
- Develop new picnic facilities, open lawn area, playground and toilet adjacent to the existing poppet head.
- Improve and upgrade existing infrastructure
- Define opportunities for a future restaurant (subject to Council and feasibility approval) and mobile vendor access; and
- Develop style guidelines for the Park.

To ascertain the level of community support for the Draft Master plan an intensive consultation process was undertaken through a range of avenues throughout the City of Maroondah. Public displays of the Draft Master plan (which included an existing conditions plan, an image panel and a Master plan panel were located at:-

- Ringwood Lake Park
- Eastland
- Municipal Offices
- Regional Libraries
- All Council Service Centres

Over 140 letters were distributed to surrounding residents, traders and individuals who requested to be kept informed after the first questionnaire.

The Draft Master plan and the questionnaire was also printed in a double page spread in the Maroondah Mail on 16 February 1999.

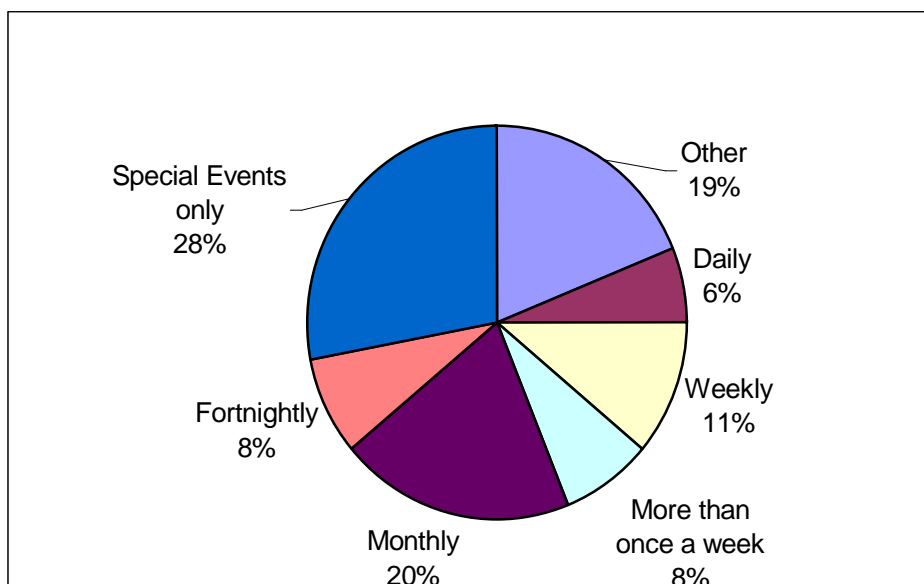
Questionnaires with reply paid envelopes were distributed with the Draft Master plan at the display locations and in letters to the community.

A total of 384 questionnaires were returned as outlined below:

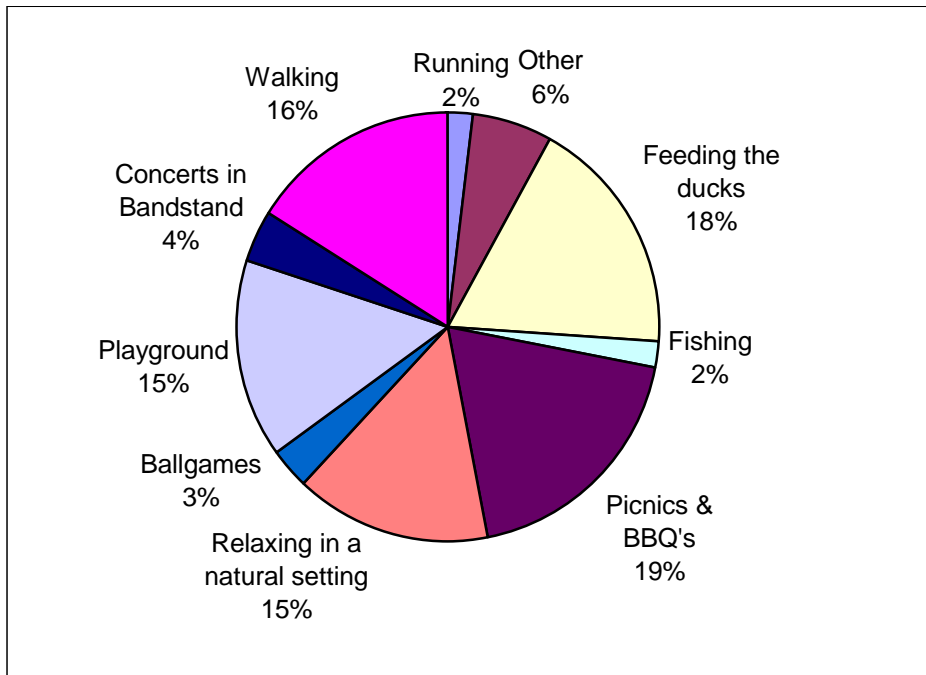
- 153 from the Maroondah Mail display
- 77 from the displays located at the municipal offices, regional libraries, service centres and at the Park
- 58 from the display at Eastland
- 93 from residents who requested on the previous questionnaire to be kept informed
- 3 from traders located on Maroondah Highway

Below are some of the results from this survey.

How often do you use the Ringwood Lake Park?



What do you use the Park for?



What are the ages of people within your household who use Ringwood Lake Park?

