

2.3 FUTURE TENANCY OPTION FOR THE VICTORIAN SIKH ASSOCIATION

(Author: CM)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***PURPOSE***

The purpose of this report is to consider feasible relocation options for the Victorian Sikh Association (VSA) and seek approval to advise the VSA of the Council endorsed options available for their consideration.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

Having regard to workshops undertaken with the VSA to document its needs, the findings of a service brief prepared for the VSA and a subsequent Options Assessment, the West Pavilion at Princes Highway Reserve is considered best placed to provide a long-term relocation outcome for the VSA. However, this option may not be accepted by the VSA on the basis that it fails to meet its preference for the provision of a significant and dedicated community facility.

It is proposed that Council informs the VSA of the final findings of the Options Assessment and the preferred relocation option (Princes Highway Reserve), noting that if the VSA decides to remain at Ashwood Reserve it would be on the condition that the VSA understands that a second hockey pitch is likely to be constructed on the site at a future time and therefore the VSA's larger scale cultural events will need to be accommodated at other venues.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Subject to VSA's confirmation of its preferred option, a budget of \$500,000 may be required to accommodate the VSA in the West Pavilion/Southern Darts space at Princes Highway Reserve.

Officers have prepared a budget bid for this work as part of the 2023/24 capital works program if this relocation option is preferred by the VSA.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

That Council advise the VSA of its preferred option for the VSA to be accommodated at the West Pavilion at Princes Highway Reserve, subject to the VSA agreeing to relocate after a refurbishment of the facility.

FUTURE TENANCY OPTION FOR THE VICTORIAN SIKH ASSOCIATION

(Author: Chris McEwan)

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the following three future tenancy options for the Victorian Sikh Association:

- i. Relocation to Princes Highway Reserve, West Pavilion*
- ii. Relocation to Southern Reserve Sports Pavilion*
- iii. Remain at Ashwood Reserve (North)*

2. Endorses the West Pavilion at Princes Highway Reserve as the preferred option to accommodate the future needs of the Victorian Sikh Association, and:

- i. Provides the Victorian Sikh Association with a deadline of 28 February 2023 to respond to the offer of future accommodation at the West Pavilion at Princes Highway Reserve*
- ii. Authorises officers to prepare a licence agreement for execution for this option dependent upon a favourable response from the Victorian Sikh Association and, if applicable, commence planning for facility improvement works for the West Pavilion at Princes Highway Reserve;*
- iii. Directs officers to prepare a licence agreement for Ashwood Reserve North Pavilion and Reserve should the Victorian Sikh Association not provide a formal response by the set deadline, on the understanding that the development of a second synthetic hockey pitch at this site remains a strategic priority for Council and will proceed, subject to external funding and budget approval.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to consider relocation options available to the Victorian Sikh Association (VSA) and seek approval to present these options to the VSA, with a timeline requirement of the end of February 2023 for it to commit to its preferred tenancy option.

BACKGROUND*Council Decisions*

At the 11 December 2018 Council Meeting, Council noted the findings and recommendations detailed in the *Melbourne Outer East Hockey Feasibility Study (August 2018)*. This regional study reviewed community needs, current and projected participation, and hockey facility provision standards to determine hockey development priorities in the outer east region. The regional study identified the existing single hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve

was at capacity and supported the development of a second synthetic hockey pitch was warranted to meet club, local and regional demand.

In accordance with the recommended actions detailed in the regional study, further investigations were undertaken to determine the feasibility of developing a second competition level synthetic hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve. The findings of the feasibility were presented to Council at its Meeting on 10 December 2019, where Council resolved (in part) to:

- *Note that the proposal to redevelop Ashwood Reserve North to provide a second synthetic field and larger carpark is feasible from a site suitability, demand and usage perspective.*
- *Note that the development of the second field can only be further considered if significant external funding was secured.*

At the Meeting of Council held 31 August 2021, Council considered Item 2.5 *Ashwood Reserve Second Hockey Pitch* and resolved that Council:

1. *Notes the findings of the community consultation on the development of a second hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve and the need to accommodate the Sikh Community Association at an alternative location if the project were to proceed.*
2. *Only consider a project funding proposal if the cost of the second hockey pitch is able to be funded from an external funding source.*
3. *Advise all stakeholders including the Waverley Hockey Club, Victoria Sikh Association, local residents and all local State and Federal Members of Parliament and candidates at the next State and Federal election that any election commitment for a second hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve will only be supported by Council if it provides at least \$2 million towards the cost of the pitch, lighting and car parking and will be contingent upon the successful relocation of the Victorian Sikh Association.*
4. *Continues to work with the Victorian Sikh Association to develop a clear outline of current and future requirements for the association.*

Workshops with VSA

In late 2021, Officers co-ordinated a series of workshops with Victorian Sikh Association (VSA) representatives to fully capture and document VSA activities, needs and aspirations.

Following this, a range of relocation options were assessed and scored, using a weighting criteria that was developed by officers in partnership with the VSA. This document was presented to the VSA on 25 March 2022, refined in accordance with VSA feedback and then shared with the VSA prior to site visits with officers and VSA representatives on 7 April 2022.

Based on the findings from the Options Analysis, preliminary design work has been undertaken, with a view to refurbishing a social room space including

a kitchen and toilet facility located on the southern end of the Princes Highway Reserve West Pavilion, currently used by the Southern Darts club. Preliminary drawings were shared with the VSA.

Proposed improvements to the area known as the “Darts Space” have been drafted to match the VSA’s needs. When compared to the pavilion currently utilised by the VSA at Ashwood Reserve, it is evident that this opportunity provides a significant increase in indoor space, especially relating to the social space and kitchen size (see Attachment 1) which have been identified as important components by the VSA.

Options

Having regard to the service brief prepared for the VSA and the findings of the Options Assessment, the following relocation options were identified for the VSA:

Option 1 – Relocation to Princes Highway Reserve, West Pavilion (Southern Darts Space)

Under this scenario, the VSA would be the predominant tenant of the Southern Darts Pavilion at Princes Highway Reserve. The VSA would be able to use this space for social gatherings, meetings and events up to 100 adults. Note: all use would need to be formalised through Recreation’s booking systems or as per licenced hours of use so we could offer opportunities for sport clubs to book/access this space outside of VSA licenced hours.

Considerations and Implications:

- i. This location is well serviced with outdoor passive space and outdoor gathering facilities, such as outdoor community BBQs, community play space and walking tracks.
- ii. A preliminary cost estimate of \$500,000 is required to upgrade the existing space to meet VSA needs and relevant building and DDA codes. This includes an expansion and upgrade of the kitchen as well as amenities.
- iii. For any large-scale cultural events or seasonal soccer activities, alternate venues such as Southern Reserve on a casual basis can be offered to the VSA that are fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of each event/activity.

Option 2 – Relocation to Southern Reserve Sports Pavilion

Under this scenario, the VSA would be allocated a licence to Southern Reserve, Mulgrave, where there is also a large community centre in close proximity on site that would be suitable to further assist the VSA on significant cultural event days and gatherings if available.

Implications:

- i. The Southern Reserve sports pavilion is currently listed in the Active Monash Capital Works Priorities Framework as a pavilion priority in the next 10 years.
- ii. The pavilion at Southern Reserve has dated social facilities. Funding opportunities should consider the need of upgrading this pavilion, with

- the opportunity to bring this project forward if State and/or Federal funding can be secured as part of any potential relocation by VSA.
- iii. The Southern Reserve sports pavilion is categorised as a Class C pavilion. The standard for this level of building is an overall footprint of 350m², including social space of 60m². This would likely need to be increased to accommodate the VSA subsequently pushing the cost of upgrading the pavilion beyond \$4.5 million.
 - iv. The VSA would be offered a licence for the facility and would be sharing the pavilion and playing field with seasonal soccer and cricket tenants. This differs from their traditional home at Ashwood Reserve, where they have had exclusive access to the site for the vast majority of their tenancy. Southern Reserve has capacity for additional users over the course of a typical week.
 - v. There is a sports floodlighting project currently underway at Southern Reserve, for 100 lux LED floodlighting across the entire field. It has been a long-standing desire of the VSA to have access to floodlighting at Ashwood Reserve.

Option 3 – Remain at Ashwood Reserve (North)

The option to remain at their current site and remain a tenant of the pavilion at Ashwood Reserve North remains an option for the VSA, but if the VSA opts for this they will be required to sign a licence agreement that:

- i. Pavilion and sports-ground use is non-exclusive (as is currently the case);
- ii. Acknowledges the redevelopment of a second synthetic hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve is considered a strategic priority for Council and that its access to the north pitch for casual use would not continue once the second hockey pitch is built; and,
- iii. VSA activities such as soccer training and cultural festival days will need to be relocated to other venues (other than Ashwood Reserve North).

It is important to note that VSA currently have very little use of the playing surface adjacent to the pavilion at Ashwood Reserve and they currently rely on other venues for their soccer activities. The existing turf pitch has limited infrastructure and no sportsground ground lighting to support any evening activities. The group does however schedule a series of informal activities and host cultural days at the site. Throughout the consultation process, the VSA emphasised the importance of having its soccer activities located next to its social centre.

In this regard, the development of a second hockey pitch at Ashwood Reserve will effectively end the VSA's hopes of creating a cultural and community centre at the reserve.

Of the above options, option 1 (West Pavilion at Princes Highway Reserve) is considered the best long-term relocation outcome for the VSA. It is acknowledged that this option is not preferred by the VSA as it fails to meet their aspirations to operate from an integrated 'community centre' style venue.

On this basis, it is proposed that officers inform and seek a response from the VSA regarding Council's preferred option and the implications of either relocating or remaining at Ashwood Reserve.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan, 2021 – 2025 outlines Council's commitment to supporting an *Active and Healthy and Engaged, Confident and Connected* community. Council is committed to supporting the VSA, by ensuring they have continued access to a venue that is fit-for-purpose and be able to accommodate, at a minimum, a similar suite of activities and events that they are currently able to offer at Ashwood Reserve.

CONSULTATIONFeedback from VSA

As officers engaged with the VSA throughout the consultation process, it became increasingly apparent that VSA expectations for a new facility were commensurate with privately owned and funded cultural/community centres, such as the Hungarian Social Club and the Chinese Association of Victoria.

The VSA has also expressed a desire to use Freeway Reserve, Mulgrave as a base to build a large social space to cater for large functions and gatherings. Officers have indicated that this is not a feasible option as it's beyond the project scope and would require the development of a significant community and cultural facility far beyond the scale and provision levels currently offered at Ashwood Reserve. Officers have continued to engage with the VSA in relation to a number of options.

The VSA has raised the following concerns regarding relocation option 1 (Princes Highway Reserve):

- There is currently no soccer field at Princes Highway Reserve. Note: The VSA has a strong preference for its social hub and soccer activities to be located together.
- There is no commercial-level kitchen proposed for on-site food preparation.
- A non-exclusive licence agreement is proposed which will require it to share the space with the Southern Darts League which currently has limited use of the facility (appears to be two evening per week). The VSA have a strong preference not to share the space.

Having reviewed the preliminary drawings for Princes Highway Reserve West Pavilion, the VSA has advised of its strong reservations about the suitability of a move to that site and is still keen to pursue a purpose-built function space at Freeway Reserve, consistent with feedback previously provided by the VSA, including:

- A perceived need to have all their social and sporting activities located at a single site (rather than having these operate across multiple sites as is currently the case)

- A desire to have a dedicated, exclusive-use space for VSA sporting, social and cultural activities (i.e. not shared with other groups)
- A strong preference for Council to consider developing a purpose-built centre for the VSA at Freeway Reserve.

Other Stakeholders

The Waverley Hockey Club, as well as all tenants at Princes Highway Reserve were also engaged throughout this process. This included a letter to each club informing them of the design work that was undertaken for the Southern Darts space at Princes Highway Reserve and the opportunity to allocate it to additional community groups if and when the refurbishment was to occur. General feedback from tenants was that they supported improvements to the space, but would like more detail about programming and typical usage.

No feedback was received from the Southern Darts League, which is currently allocated the space at Princes Highway Reserve.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Maintaining and enhancing Council's relationship with the VSA will support Council's Community Vision for an engaged and inclusive Monash, with a particular focus on community strengthening, supporting diversity and multicultural groups.

In addition to sporting activities, the VSA provides an important program of cultural, social, educational and charity events/initiatives, bringing together members of Victoria's large Sikh community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no human rights implications linked to this report.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Gender Impact Assessment has not been undertaken to support this report. The VSA is a highly inclusive and gender diverse community group and all of the future tenancy options presented in this report are done so with a vision to support and enhance this into the future.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A budget of \$500,000 is required to relocate the VSA to the Darts space at Princes Highway Reserve West Pavilion. Upgrade works will focus on improving general aesthetics, natural lighting, kitchen amenities and bathroom compliance. Proposed works include:

- Expansion and modernising of the kitchen facilities, including a new internal servery
- Expansion of the amenities to meet DDA compliance
- New double-glazed external windows to increase natural light into the social area

- A social room/multipurpose space of 92m²

Officers have prepared a budget bid for these works to be considered as part of the 2023/24 capital works program if the proposal is accepted by the VSA.

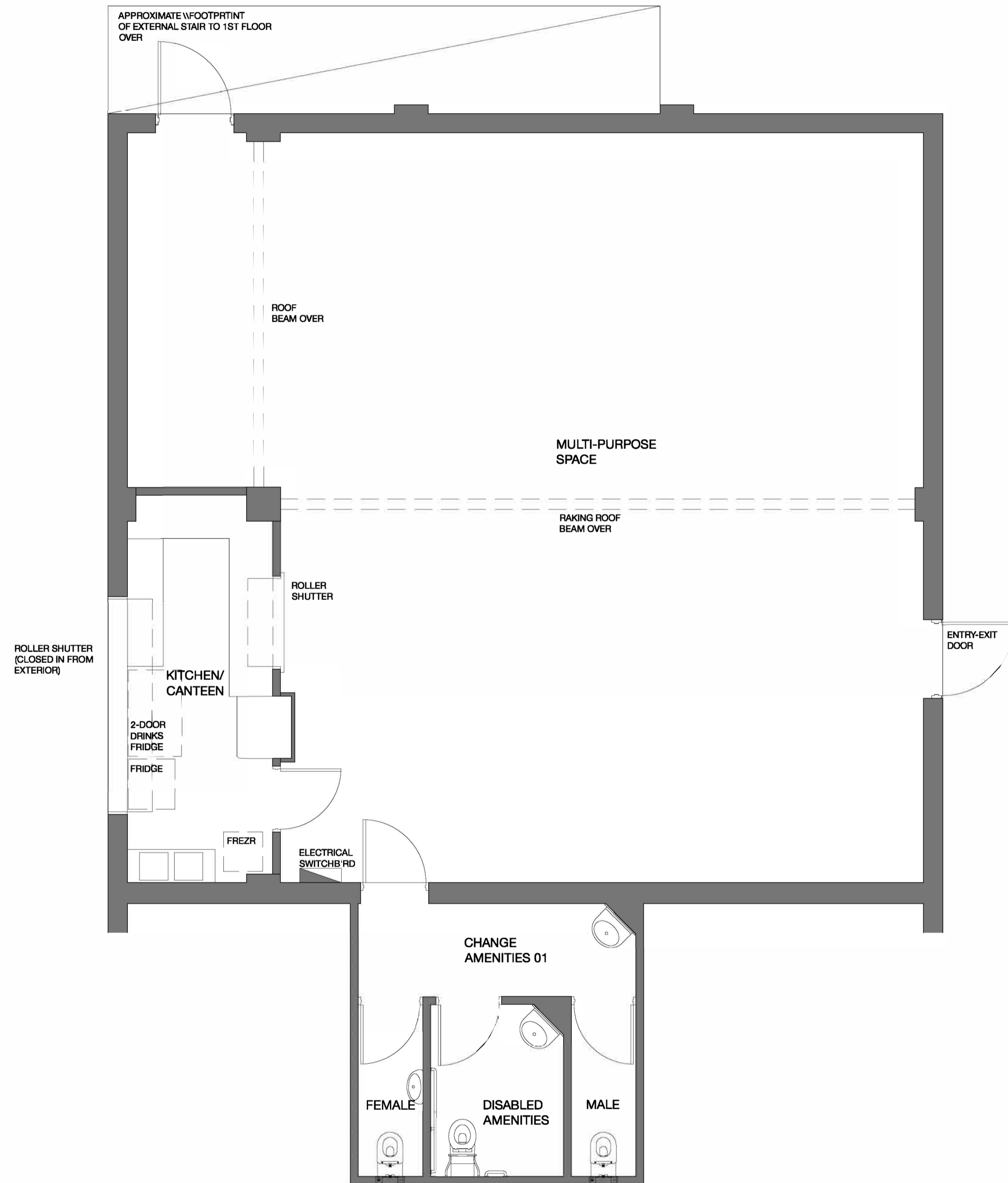
CONCLUSION

Officers recommend offering the options to the VSA with a timeline requirement of 28 February 2023 to commit to their preferred tenancy option. Once feedback is received from the VSA, officers can commence preparation of the appropriate tenancy documentation and, if applicable, progress with planning for the facility upgrade at Princes Highway Reserve.

ATTACHMENTS

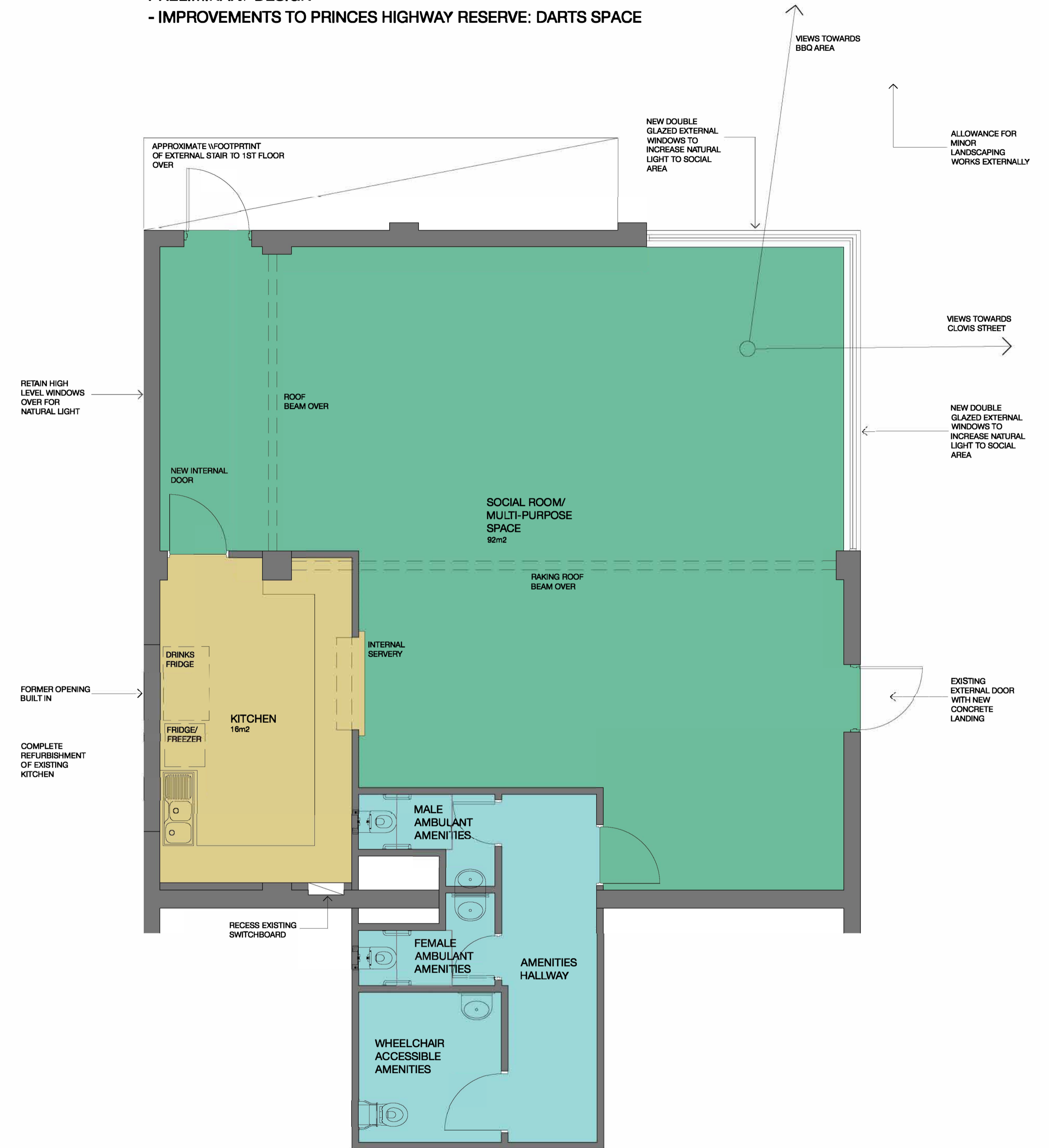
Attachment 1 – Site Plans and Preliminary Improvements Plan at Princes Highway Reserve West, Southern Darts Space

EXISTING FLOORPLAN
- PRINCES HIGHWAY RESERVE: DARTS SPACE



01 EXISTING CONDITIONS FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:50

PRELIMINARY DESIGN
- IMPROVEMENTS TO PRINCES HIGHWAY RESERVE: DARTS SPACE



02 PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:50

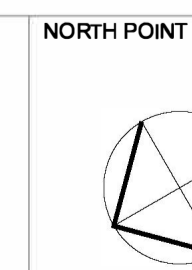
PRELIMINARY ISSUE
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

This Drawing shall be read in conjunction with all other Drawings and Specifications issued to the Builder. The Builder shall check all dimensions and any discrepancies shall be referred to Freeform Architects Pty Ltd before the work proceeds. Figured dimensions shall take precedence over scaled dimensions. All necessary shop drawings shall be obtained by the Builder and be submitted to Freeform Architects Pty Ltd before the work proceeds. All Drawings and Specifications are the copyright of Freeform Architects Pty Ltd.

REV	ISSUE	NOTES
P1		PRELIMINARY ISSUE TO MCC - 13.06.2022
A		ISSUE TO MCC FOR INFORMATION - JULY 2022

REV	ISSUE	NOTES

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PROJECT
MONASH CITY COUNCIL
PRINCES HIGHWAY RESERVE
OAKLEIGH EAST
PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT WORKS

DRAWING TITLE
EXISTING CONDITIONS FLOOR PLAN
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN

PROJECT NUMBER
1463

DATE
JULY 2022

DRAWN
FREEFORM

SCALE
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CP.01 **A**
DRAWING NUMBER & ISSUE

FLOORPLAN

- ASHWOOD RESERVE NORTH PAVILION

