Healthy Planet, Healthy People

Why this is important

Integrating natural environments into daily living can lead to a happier, healthier and more connected community.

Access to green spaces and natural environments promotes relaxation, mental wellbeing and can foster social interactions, which can reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Exposure to nature has been shown to improve cognitive functions, including attention, memory and creativity. Banyule's natural environments encourage physical activity, which is essential for maintaining physical health.

Connecting with nature fosters a sense of environmental stewardship and awareness. People who spend time in natural settings are more likely to engage in behaviours that protect and preserve the environment, critical for the health of our plant and everyone. Natural environments, including our green urban spaces, help mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing urban heat islands and managing stormwater. This contributes to a healthier and more resilient urban environment, critical for the health of our planet and all life on earth.

Existing evidence tells us that:

- Access to the natural environment is important to 66% of Banyule residents.
- 30% of people say that their mental and physical health is impacted by the effects of climate change.
- 79% of Victorians are concerned about the negative impacts of climate change.
- 91% of parents believe it's important that their children spend time in nature.
- Older Victorians are more connected to nature than younger Victorians.

Our community have told us they want

- Access to open and green spaces, which was a key theme in community consultations, as residents highlighted its importance for health and wellbeing.
- Action to address concerns about the impact of development on the natural environment.

Objectives for healthy planet, healthy people

- Put caring for country principles at the centre
- Enhance biodiversity, green, blue and open spaces
- Invite people to connect with and care for our natural environments
- Foster eco-wise practices and further climate action
- Strengthen neighbourhood ecosystems to enhance capacity and resilience