

New Footscray Hospital Project

Site Preparation Works Update



The Victorian Government has provided up to \$1.5 billion to deliver a new Footscray Hospital – the largest ever health infrastructure investment in the State.

With construction expected to get underway soon, the Victorian Health Building Authority advises that further activity will be taking place to prepare the site on the corner of Geelong and Ballarat Roads, Footscray.

What's happening?

To prepare for construction of the new Footscray Hospital, the site on the corner of Geelong and Ballarat Roads will start to be cleared from 1 March 2021. This includes removing some trees around the perimeter of the site, followed by trees and shrubs within the site boundary.

We understand the significance of trees and green spaces to the community and have worked closely with the Maribyrnong City Council and contractors to minimise the impact to flora and fauna wherever possible.

Which trees are being removed and why?

Within the Project site

Approximately 50 trees and a variety of shrubs within the Project site will be removed to clear the site for construction.

This will ensure we can maximise the potential for the new hospital from a design and operational perspective and most importantly, ensure it is safe and accessible for the community.

Perimeter of the site

Currently, there are 56 trees along the site perimeter. Of which, 22 (less than half) will be taken out to allow for hoarding to be erected around the site, separating works from the public and keeping pedestrians and vehicles safe during construction.

An arborist report, commissioned for the Project, has assessed these trees (namely Eucalypts, Corymbia and Melaleuca) to be in poor to fair condition. In addition, many are not considered suitable for retention due to poor or under-developed form, limited size and significance in the local landscape.

We will work closely with Council to protect the remaining 34 trees on the perimeter of the site wherever possible during construction, in accordance with Council guidelines.

Can any of the trees be saved?

We are working closely with Council to relocate the Phoenix canariensis (Canary Island Date Palm) from the site's Ballart Road frontage to Yarraville Gardens.

While options to retain or transplant the other (mostly native) trees on the perimeter of the site have been explored, their poor or under-developed form, limited size and significance in the local landscape makes them unsuitable for relocation.

The trees within the site will also need to be removed as retention would compromise the footprint of the hospital, as well as the Project's ability to provide safe access for pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

An arborists assessment has been completed to inform this decision. It looked at:

- Structural strength of trees and vegetation, including the size and location of tree roots
- Health and life expectancy of trees
- Amenity and environmental value that trees provide to the local area
- Location of utilities in proximity to trees.

Where possible, the removed trees will be repurposed and donated to local council, schools and community groups for reuse for such purposes as habitat logs and other local initiatives.

How will the trees be removed?

Trees and shrubs will be removed in accordance with Council permit conditions, and under the direction of a qualified arborist who has also assessed their condition.

Prior to removal, the trees will also be inspected for the presence of wildlife, and qualified wildlife handlers will be called in to safely move wildlife as necessary.

Has the community been informed?

Through public information sessions, engagement with the Community Consultative Committee and attendance at community events, the Victorian Health Building Authority has previously advised the community a clear site is required to ensure we are able to maximise the potential of this significant new hospital for the west.

In late 2020 and early 2021, community plant rehoming events were held on site to provide community members with the opportunity to salvage some of the native plants and shrubs before the site was closed for early works.

We are also now sharing more specific information related to tree removal as part of clearance works with our nearest neighbours.

What green spaces and trees will be included in the design of the new hospital?

We understand the significance of green spaces and trees to the community.

The new hospital will feature extensive landscaping linked to the surrounding area, with the integration of nature throughout the entire precinct.

Overall, significantly more trees will be planted than removed – contributing to the precinct's five-star Green Star rating. This includes at least 60 trees in the surrounding streetscape to replace the trees being removed from the perimeter of the site.

We'll share more information around the landscaping plans closer to the time.

Other activity on site

Hoarding

Work to install hoarding is progressing, with the Federal Street, Tiernan Street and Geelong Road boundaries now close to completion.

From this week, works will continue on the Geelong and Ballarat Road boundaries.

This notification also identifies further site activity and some changes to traffic conditions as the installation of hoarding progresses and the site is prepared for construction.

Changes to Public Transport

The Victoria University/Ballarat Road bus stop will be temporarily relocated approximately 250m west along Ballarat Road, adjacent to the Footscray Park Bowls Club. The temporary stop will remain in place for the duration of the Project, until construction is complete (expected in 2025).

Bus routes that service this bus stop and which will be impacted include 406, 409 and 941 night bus, however, services will not change for these routes.

Signage notification will be provided in advance, please follow any signage in place for your safety.

Road and footpath changes

Over the coming weeks, both temporary and permanent footpath and lane closures will take place, including on:

Geelong Road

- Permanent closure of the Princess Highway Service Road along Geelong Road. Motorists can still continue to turn left onto Ballarat Road from Geelong Road.
- Pedestrian diversions will be in place along Geelong Road.

Ballarat Road

- Staged temporary closure of the left-hand lane and footpath travelling west along Ballarat Road.
- The lane closure will be in place periodically during off-peak hours between 9:30am – 2:30pm for one month, with the left-hand lane reopen to normal traffic conditions outside of these hours.

Is this the start of construction of the new Footscray Hospital?

No, this is part of site preparation works before construction of the new hospital begins.

Further communications will be made prior to the start of construction of the new hospital.

For your safety

Please remain alert around the construction site and follow any signage in place as changes may occur daily.

Traffic control will be in place to ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

How can I stay informed?

Information on the new Footscray Hospital is available on the Victorian Health Building Authority website at vhhsba.vic.gov.au/health-infrastructure/new-footscray-hospital

For further information about the site preparation works please contact:

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