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FOOTSCRAY  
UNIVERSITY  
TOWN

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# PROGRAM 2017–2020

A partnership between Victoria University and Maribyrnong City Council



**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**  
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Over the next ten years, Maribyrnong City Council and Victoria University are joining forces to revitalise Footscray as a University Town – a hub of learning, knowledge, innovation, creativity and opportunity.

Footscray University Town (FUT) seeks to harness and build on the strengths of Footscray and Victoria University – leading sports facilities, growing creative and recreational industry sectors, knowledge enterprises, vibrant cultural diversity and a proud industrial heritage – to create a strong social and economic future based around education, jobs, creativity and opportunity.

Through the initiative, the partners seek to integrate and align University, Council, business and community activities and interests, opening up new opportunities for employment, enterprise and investment throughout Melbourne’s west.

Footscray University Town will play a key role in cementing the west’s reputation as a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable region in which to live, work, study and recreate.

## VISION

Footscray is recognised as Australia’s premier University Town, at the forefront of the knowledge economy. Through harnessing University and community knowledge and resources, Footscray is a smart, creative and vibrant multicultural community with access to opportunity and prosperity.



## What is a University Town?

International experience has shown that university towns are prosperous and socially cohesive generating benefits for both the university and the community. University towns contribute to a culture of youthful vibrancy, research and learning, and shared experiences and facilities that spill over into employment, business opportunities, industry innovation and community development throughout a local region.

After significant research and exploration, Victoria University (VU) and Maribyrnong City Council (MCC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in late 2013, which resulted in a shared Footscray University Town Business Framework to guide the partners in working together to deliver projects that would contribute to the evolution of Footscray as a university town.

The partnership between Victoria University and Maribyrnong City Council continues to strengthen. Connections are being built with corporate and community entities and there are opportunities to leverage outcomes through working with government, local businesses and industries and community service providers.

## Sustainable Development Principles

The FUT Partners believe the following sustainable development principles should filter across all Footscray University Town programs, activities and developments.

- **Society and Culture** with emphasis on access, diversity and inclusion
- **Economic Development** with emphasis on access to employment, enterprise and entrepreneurship
- **Environmental Sustainability** with emphasis energy and water systems, connections to place, and walking, cycling and public transport
- **Knowledge and Innovation** with emphasis on research for impact, sharing knowledge, creativity and entrepreneurship.

Footscray University Town will take some time to evolve. The Partners anticipate a 10 year journey to establish the qualities and attributes that will start to identify Footscray as a university town. A long term plan, with flexibility to adapt to the challenges and opportunities that emerge over time, guides the evolution of the initiative and provides confidence for investment and funding decisions.

# PILLARS

Through six outcome-focused pillars, the FUT partners will strive to deliver benefits for University staff and students, and for the communities of Footscray and Melbourne's west.



## SMART FOOTSCRAY

Knowledge sharing, learning and smart digital technologies will help solve local problems and expand opportunities for innovation, enterprise and community development in Footscray and Melbourne's west with expanded pathways to employment.

## CREATIVE FOOTSCRAY

Footscray's thriving arts, cultural and creative industries flourish through collaboration and engagement between the University, Council, community and business; and through a rich annual program of events and place making initiatives.

## HEALTHY AND ACTIVE FOOTSCRAY

Community health and wellbeing are enhanced, drawing on Victoria University's reputation for excellence in sport, exercise and health science, strong collaborations with industry partners, and community participation in sport, health promotion and active living programs.



## SUSTAINABLE FOOTSCRAY

With commitment to reducing greenhouse emissions, green cover provides shade and mitigates heat, and urban development exhibits best practice in sustainable use of resources. Cycling, walking and public transport are preferred modes of travel.

## GREAT PLACES AND CONNECTIONS

Footscray is an attractive, distinctive and affordable retail and services hub, with a vibrant cafe culture and evening economy, seamlessly integrated with Victoria University. Public places, key destinations and institutions are accessible, well-connected, safe and inclusive.

## COLLABORATIVE AND ENGAGED

Local communities and stakeholders are engaged and contribute to Footscray University Town. University students and staff are a valued part of the community. Footscray is highly regarded as a university town, with benefits for the whole community.



# FORWARD PROGRAM 2017 TO 2020

The Forward Program identifies 15 catalyst initiatives designed to leverage significant progress towards Footscray University Town, and create benefits for the communities of Footscray and Victoria University.

## INITIATIVES

### 1. Footscray Learning Precinct

Work with the Victorian Government and key early learning and education stakeholders to advance the development of the proposed Footscray Learning Precinct – an innovative networked model of education across life stages in Footscray with potential new

investments in STEM, early learning and secondary education facilities.

### 2. Smart City Strategy

Develop a smart city strategy for Footscray University Town, identifying ways in which smart technologies can provide solutions to local problems; building on strategic partnerships with government, industry providers and community entities and identifying opportunities for funding.

### 3. Sports and Health Partnerships for an Active and Healthy Community

Apply VU's research and teaching capacities in sport, exercise and health science to strengthen community health and wellbeing; drawing on VU at Whitten Oval and key partnerships with sporting organisations such as the Western Bulldogs.

Develop sports promotional activities that engage industry and community (eg. fun runs, ISEAL trial days, Zumba in the Street) through partnerships with community health and recreation services.

Facilitate the development of Footscray/VU as a centre for excellence in sport and exercise science.

Foster projects that promote health and wellbeing through the Active Maribyrnong program and engagement with sports and recreational groups.

## 4. Footscray Library, Community and Cultural Hub

Develop a precinct masterplan and delivery strategy for a new library and community hub with a town park – a new community-meeting place and green open space in central Footscray.

## 5. Footscray Evening Economy

Identify and support cultural and economic development projects that activate Footscray after 5pm, contributing to the sense of safety and wellbeing, and economic prosperity.

## 6. VU's Presence and Integration with Footscray

Develop a campus activation and design framework to improve the integration of VU's Footscray Nicholson campus with Footscray and promote increased activation of the campus as a green, creative, community learning commons.

Improve the gateways to VU's Footscray campuses so they are outward looking, safe and welcoming; including improvements to pedestrian crossings, connections for cyclists, signage and presentation.

Continue to develop VU's outward, community-based presence in Footscray (currently located at VU at MetroWest), providing a venue for knowledge exchange, creativity and enterprise, information, meetings, events and community engagement.

Facilitate projects that strengthen VU's presence in Footscray through improved signage and increased activity and engagement.

## 7. Festival City Program

Facilitate festivals and events in Footscray in partnership and collaboration with major Melbourne festivals, community and business organisations, and other levels of government. Seek opportunities to leverage from major festivals including the Jazz, Emerge in the West, Fringe and Melbourne Knowledge festivals.

## 8. Graduate to Employment Program

Develop an overall plan for strengthening and expanding the range of structured opportunities for student internships, applied learning and graduate employment with not-for-profit, corporate, business, Council and government agencies in the City of Maribyrnong.

Create a 'place-wide' awareness of community pathways into VU's education and training courses and subsequent pathways to employment in the region.

## 9. Footscray Art Prize

Partner with local arts and community organisations to deliver the biennial Footscray Art Prize, attracting local and national artists and promoting Footscray as a thriving arts hub.

## 10. Knowledge and Cultural Development Agenda

Local Solutions Research Agenda – identify two–three community issues that can be the focus for innovative solution-focused research projects, for example, where VU's specialist knowledge and skills can help solve local problems. Focus areas include health, engineering, sustainability, business, community development.

Knowledge Exchange – Continue to conduct and support opportunities for conversation and sharing knowledge and ideas through forums, seminars and public events including the Game Changers Conversation Series and University outreach events.

University Inside Out festival – work with partners and likeminded organisations (such as School of Life, Public Pedagogies Institute; VU Colleges and Institutes) to develop a festival program for public engagement with the University, at the same time bringing community culture, skills and knowledge into focus.



## 11. Footscray Connector

Invest in the design and creation of a Footscray University Town pathway/connector linking key destinations including the two VU campuses, the train station, major employers and services, the proposed Footscray Learning Precinct and the City library and community hub. Considerations include signage, greening, bicycle and pedestrian connections.

## 12. Sustainable Footscray

Develop a strategy to enhance the sustainability of central Footscray that includes:

- initiatives to optimise opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian travel
- urban design and greening initiatives that improve environmental sustainability.

## 13. New Generation Employment

Promote an innovative start-up business culture and clusters in Footscray through supporting the development of The Hanger start-up business generator, the Dream Factory and other makers networks, co-work and business incubator opportunities.

Develop a prospectus and proactive strategies to identify and attract business and R&D investment into Footscray, aligned with the University and FUT objectives.

## 14. Affordable Living Options for Students

Identify ways to diversify and expand affordable living (particularly associated with the University population) through the MCC housing strategy and working with developers and housing associations.

## 15. Build Awareness, Collaboration and Engagement

Develop an FUT promotional strategy and associated collateral, informing more people and businesses about FUT - its achievements and aspirations - and continue to take advantage of opportunities for collaboration and joint endeavour.

Create opportunities for participation, collaboration, feedback and involvement in FUT activities

Foster opportunities to enhance social capital and community development in Footscray through initiatives such as V4U day.

# 10 INDICATORS TO MEASURE PROGRESS

Ten indicators will measure progress towards Footscray University Town in 2020.

- 1 Growth in VU at MetroWest activity and engagement
- 2 Increased number of students at Footscray campuses
- 3 Growth in small business start-ups and University aligned knowledge enterprises
- 4 Increases in pedestrian and cycle movements in central Footscray
- 5 Growth in student accommodation beds and students living in Footscray
- 6 Increases in University partnerships and collaborations with community organisations, business and industry
- 7 Increased public awareness of value and benefits of FUT (Recognition and reputation)
- 8 Increases in VU staff and student engagement with Footscray
- 9 Growth in events and visitors to events and participation in recreation
- 10 Growth in evening economy enterprises in central Footscray and environs

# PLACE PLAN

A master plan has been prepared, identifying place-based projects that, over time, will enhance the physical environment and promote the seamless integration of the university campuses and central Footscray.

The plan seeks to optimise opportunities for activation of, and engagement with, the University campuses and central Footscray.





# FOOTSCRAY UNIVERSITY TOWN PARTNERS

The City of Maribyrnong is a thriving hub of arts, culture, cuisine, retail, education and innovation and has a growing population. Within the City, Footscray's population is forecast to increase by 170 per cent to more than 45,000 by 2041. The City offers a large employment base with new generation enterprises moving to the area. It is close to central Melbourne, has excellent public transport and sporting facilities, a strong focus on community and learning, and, with natural assets such as the Maribyrnong River, is an attractive option to live, work, study and do business.

Victoria University is one of Australia's few dual-sector universities, offering pathways from vocational to higher education. Based in Footscray, it has more than 46,000 students at its campuses in Melbourne's

west and the CBD, including almost 5000 international students.

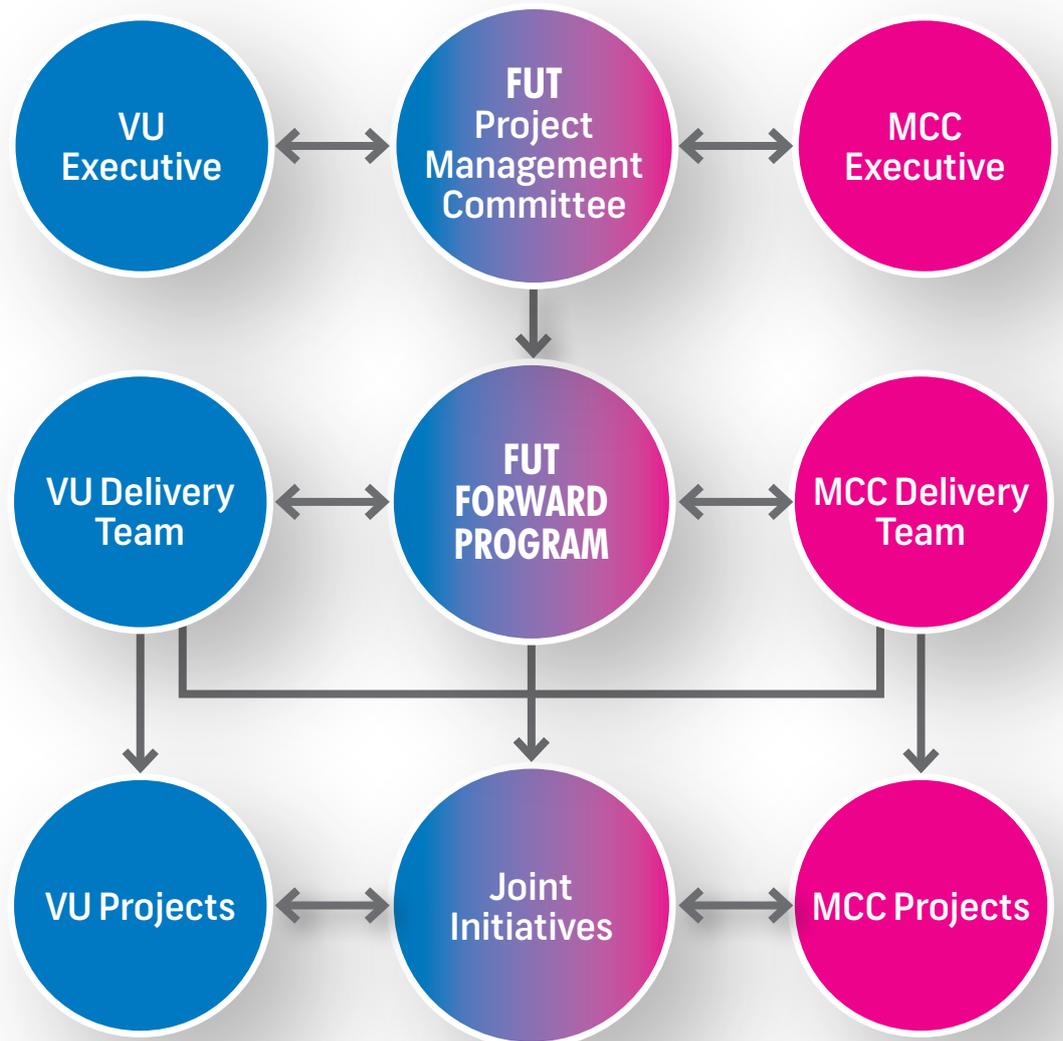
Victoria University provides personalised, flexible and industry relevant learning and research opportunities that enhance social and economic outcomes in its heartland of Melbourne's west.

VU at MetroWest brings Victoria University into the heart of Footscray, providing opportunities for engagement, knowledge sharing, learning, conversations, meetings and cultural exchange.

It includes the VU community psychology clinic, Skills and Jobs Centre, Hatch Design Studio, The Hanger, Fresh Student Radio, exhibition and event space, hot desks, and meeting spaces for hire.



### FUT Governance Model



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# FOOTSCRAY UNIVERSITY TOWN

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