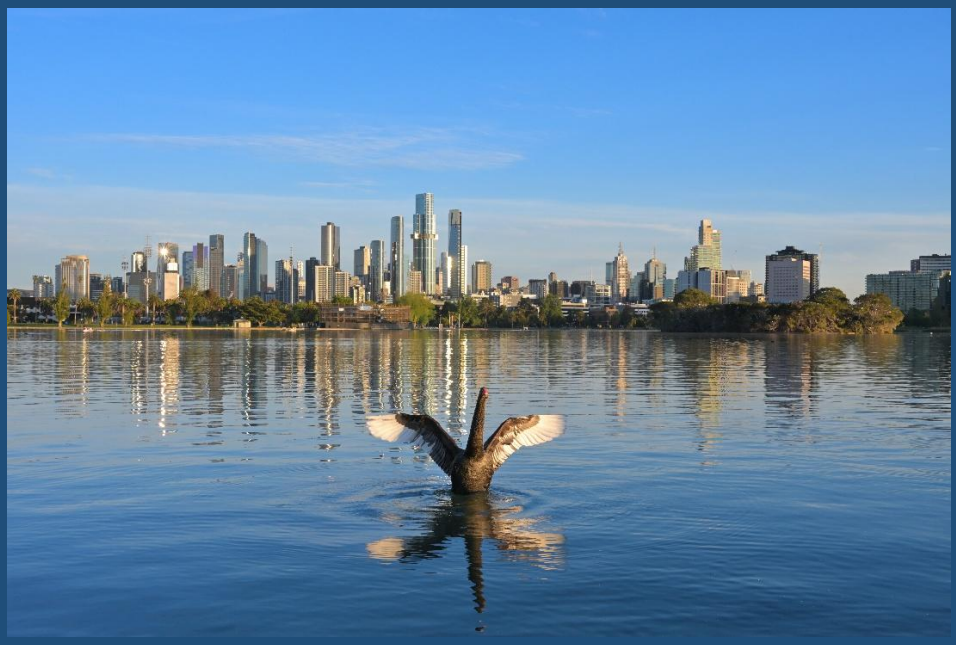
STOP THE NEGLECT!



Election 2026 - Put the “PARK” back into Albert Park

Lake ALIVE!

Awareness. Advocacy. Action.

2026 STATE ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR ALBERT PARK

Albert Park is one of Victoria's most significant public spaces. With the right investment and governance reforms, it can reclaim its place as a world-class urban park while continuing to host international sporting events.

Lake ALIVE! seeks commitments from all parties and candidates to fund and implement the following priorities for Albert Park Reserve:

1. **AN 8-YEAR PLAN TO SPEND AT LEAST $125M.**
2. **A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY**
3. **HEALTHY PARK ECOLOGY FOR HEALTHY PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE**
4. **GREEN SPACE FOR OUR FUTURE**

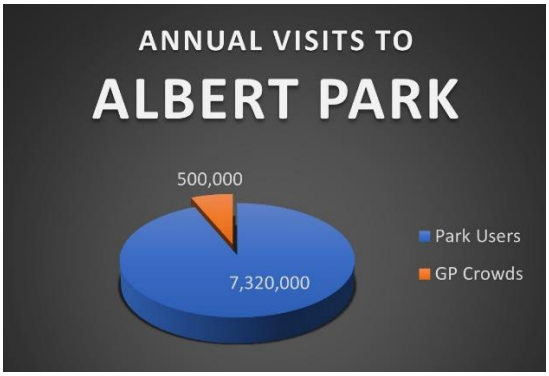
INTRODUCTION - VICTORIAN ELECTION PRIORITIES

The Lake ALIVE! advocacy group is passionate about putting the "PARK" back into Albert Park, our long neglected but much loved "People's Playground."

We will use the 2026 Victorian election campaign to highlight the impact of decades of state government underfunding and neglect.

We're targeting the candidates and 100,000 voters of Albert Park and Prahran. But the issues are also relevant to all Victorians.





This significant public asset has increasingly been managed to support commercial activities rather than fulfilling its primary role as one of Melbourne's premier public parks.

Albert Park has 7.8 million visits a year. The next decade of Grand Prix financial support, including event support and the $395m pit building, will likely cost Victorian taxpayers around $170m per year[1]. That's $340 per GP patron. Current funding for the park itself appears to equate to less than a dollar per regular park visitor.

Albert Park users are dismayed that we're now 7 years into a much hyped, 25-year Master Plan with very minimal action to date.

It's time to stop pushing paperwork around and start acting on the promised Master Plan and Albert Park Advisory Committee, without the Grand Prix Corporation calling all the shots.

[1] See Parliamentary Budget Office report https://static.pbo.vic.gov.au/files/PBO_Policy-costing-Defund-the-F1-Grand-Prix-(March%202026)_PUBLIC.pdf

PRIORITY 1: AN 8-YEAR PLAN TO SPEND AT LEAST $125M.

Restoring Albert Park requires sustained investment over at least two terms of government.

Lake ALIVE! proposes at least $20 million dollars in additional park improvement funding should be allocated to Albert Park Reserve in the first year of the new government, followed by at least $15m in additional funding for each subsequent year.

This funding amount must be for essential improvements in the park itself, independent of any decisions to build pedestrian bridges or other expensive infrastructure, or costs associated with the Ngargee tree encampment. It must also be additional to ongoing sport grant programs and compensation arrangements that benefit sporting clubs, but not recreational park users.

The proposed investment totals approximately $125 million over eight years.

This is less than one year's Victorian taxpayer funding for the Australian Grand Prix.

It is also less than one-third of the cost of the $395 million pit building.

Broken and missing seats, collapsing bluestone retaining walls, crumbling lake edges and pothole-puddle pathways are all ultra visible evidence of long-term park infrastructure neglect. Public toilets are dated and wheelchair access is badly limited around the park, especially when GP infrastructure is added for 6 months of each year. Signage is faded or vandalised, contributing to poor park user behaviour.









PRIORITY 1: AN 8-YEAR PLAN TO SPEND AT LEAST $125M cont…

A recent Parks Victoria survey[2] found that Albert Park is primarily used for informal recreation. Walking, dog-walking, cycling, informal sports, picnicking, and birdwatching make up the most popular activities.

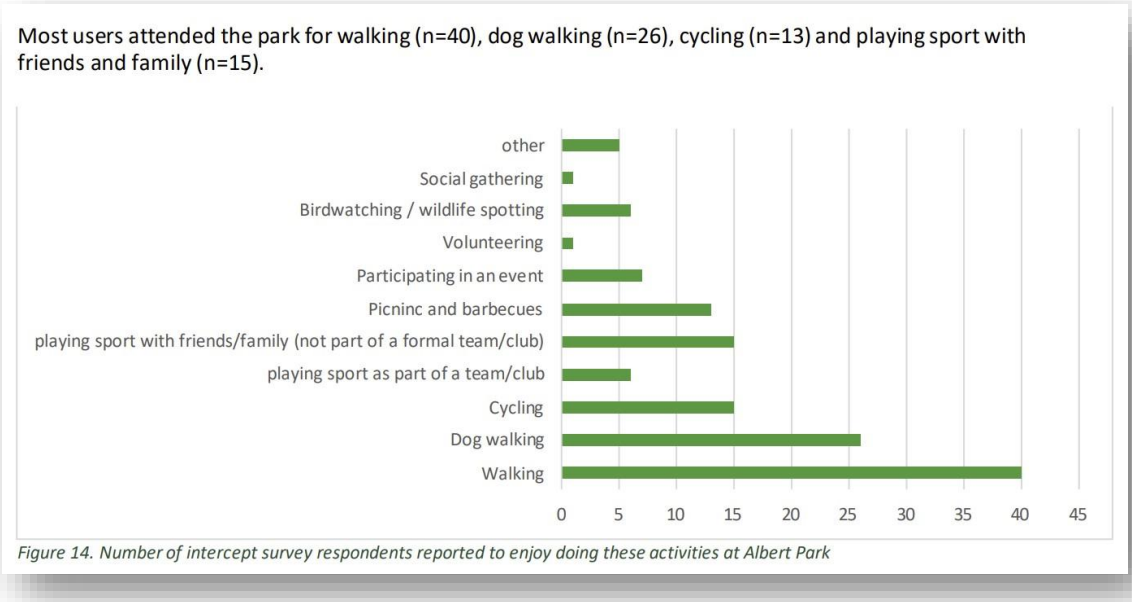


Figure 14. Number of intercept survey respondents reported to enjoy doing these activities at Albert Park

Seven times as many respondents visit the park for walking than for formal sports, but almost none of the spend on the park has benefited these informal/recreational users.

Birdwatchers have been saddened by the deaths of more than 1,400 birds during the first 18 months of suspected avian botulism at Albert Park, highlighting the park's climate challenges and declining environmental health.



It's especially timely to provide a healthy environment for resilient birdlife, as Albert Park has 27 species at high risk of bird flu. We have 80+ bird species in the park, including three species deemed vulnerable in Victoria.

With a commitment to enhance the park in smaller, achievable increments, upgrades can be aligned with the GP footprint and GP timing. The alternative is to simply stand back until 2037 and say, *"Nothing can be done at all because we don't want to disrupt the Grand Prix."* This would take our landmark park to 40+ years after the last major improvements, with no work even started.

[2] p79, Albert Park Sports Management Plan, 2026. https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects/greater-melbourne/albert-park-upgrades

PRIORITY 2: A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Albert Park needs legislative and procedural changes as badly as it needs serious funding.

a) **The AGPC must be required to demonstrate measurable reductions in park occupation, environmental impacts and community disruption.**
b) **The Grands Prix Act must be modified so that the AGPC is bound by the same environmental and litter laws as everybody else during the entire 6-month occupation.**
c) **Cable ties are recognised by the Australian Litter Measure and must be added to the state government's list of banned single-use plastics.**
d) **The EPA must be empowered to act year-round on waste issues or environmental issues at Albert Park in the same way that it can act on other construction sites.**
e) **Major building and lighting projects in this state park must be subjected to environmental review and public scrutiny.**
f) **The Albert Park Advisory Committee, promised in state parliament in October 2025, must be established before the end of 2026, with wide terms of reference and meaningful engagement with stakeholders.**
g) **The Lake Management Plan, required under the 2019 Master Plan, MUST be commenced and fast-tracked, with healthy changes adopted in 2027. (This is urgent for water sports on the lake, as well as walkers, runners and park wildlife.)**





Our park is disrupted for 6 months per year for AGPC build and take-down, the pleasant warmer months when people want to maximise their park enjoyment.

This disruption spanned at least 10 of Victoria's 13 annual public holidays in 2025/2026, with extensive ugly 'temporary' infrastructure taking valuable picnic space and ruining park amenity.

Wildlife rescuers were delayed by inefficient access arrangements as the park closure kicked in.

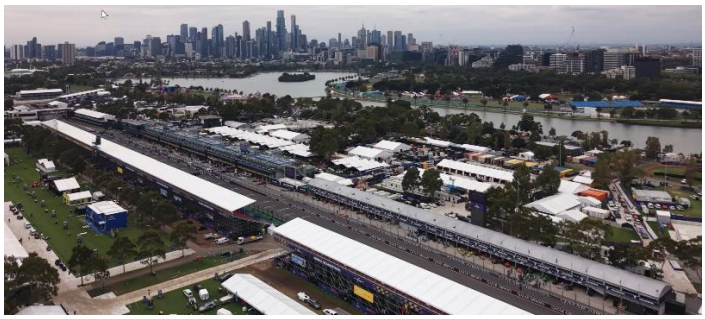
A perimeter of razor wire surrounded the People's Playground, while the people were excluded from most of their park for three weeks.

PRIORITY 2: A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT cont…

In 1996, a larger race day crowd was accommodated with a much smaller footprint and half of the occupation time in the park.

Large areas of grassland are now so affected for so long that they need grass replaced and take months to recover, while some areas are permanently scarred by the footprint.





In early 2026, the State Government released results of its public engagement survey[3] which received 82 submissions a day relating to Grand Prix impact. Environmental concerns were the most common issues raised in submissions.

Analysis of submissions identified several recurring themes:

- Community access and amenity disruption: concerns about longer access restrictions and prolonged road closures associated with the extended race period, affecting schools, sporting activities and recreational use.
- Environmental impacts: concerns regarding noise, air pollution, and impacts on parkland, wildlife and the lake ecosystem.

Grand Prix set-up/take-down work is unnecessarily slow, with limited working days and working hours, well behind other global F1 sites. Regular access and disabled access are limited.







[3] https://engage.vic.gov.au/the-australian-grands-prix-amendment-bill-2025

PRIORITY 2: A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT cont…

Submissions collectively reflect a strong sense of stewardship toward Albert Park and a desire for balance between major events and local community use.

Together, these views illustrate a community that values both Victoria's global reputation and the preservation of Albert Park as a shared public space. The overarching message from respondents is not opposition to the Grand Prix itself, but a call for better management of its footprint, duration, and environmental impacts.

In 1994, the Victorian government exempted the Grand Prix from state environment laws and the consequences continue today.



Environment Effects Act 1978
EXEMPTION OF AUSTRALIAN FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX AT ALBERT PARK AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

The Governor in Council has declared by proclamation under section 3 (4) of the Environment Effects Act that the Act does not apply to the Australian Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park and associated works.

The Minister for Planning has stated that an EES is not necessary because of studies to be carried out by Melbourne Parks and Waterways and by Melbourne Grand Prix Promotions Pty Ltd.

ROBIN SAUNDERS
Chief Assessment Officer
Department of Planning and Development

In 2025, the Victorian government approved the new $395m pit building and also broadcast television lights at Junction Oval without an environmental review, even though this is a public park with important regional environmental significance for Melbourne.

In 2025, when the state government amended the GP Act to enable a 3-week lockout, political leaders missed an opportunity to revisit environmental aspects of the Act.







PRIORITY 2: A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT cont…

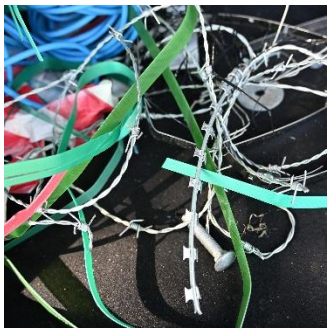




Despite the government survey, AGPC assurances, and the 3-week lockout, the 2026 event once again fell well below community expectations in terms of waste management and environment protection.

Lake ALIVE! members collected thousands of cable ties and other dangerous litter dropped in the park as fencing was removed, and we found magpie nests full of cable ties.





The last (2025) AGPC annual report referred to being a good community citizen.

- **Build positive event brand perceptions**
  - to increase positive public support for the events;
  - to build a brand identity which is consistent, recognisable and sustainable in the long term;
  - to engage with the community at large to promote the positive attributes and benefits of the events;
  - to establish a "Brand Identity" that is sustainable, long term;
  - to increase and leverage the following of the sports (Formula 1 and MotoGP) among core customer segments; and
  - to be considered a good community citizen, minimising our impact on the people and regions in which we operate.

Unfortunately, the 2026 event had maximum impact on the community, and strong state government leadership is needed to demand respect for our historic park.

PRIORITY 3: HEALTHY PARK ECOLOGY FOR HEALTHY PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

Urgent priorities for improvement:

a) **Permanently allocate a dedicated management vessel for Albert Park's rangers.**
b) **Ensure best practice resurfacing of main lake walls to retain higher water levels through more of the year, while also providing quiet nesting spaces and egress for waterbirds with young.** (Note: Concrete lake edges are NOT current world best practice, and should be removed - or at least visually softened - in places where appropriate.)
c) **Appropriate new water filtration ponds and planting must be phased in over 3 years, to improve water quality and reduce toxins from the unfiltered storm water flowing into the lake.**
d) **Reduce lake-sourced irrigation for preparation of GP grassland before the F1 event and to repair GP-damaged parkland after each year's event.**
e) **Provide lake aeration to prevent stagnant water and reduce the avian botulism risk.**
f) **Adopt CoPP tree and planting targets to create more shade, improve wildlife diversity, and reduce lake evaporation in summer.**
g) **Ensure at least 2 wildlife officers are included in the localised Albert Park operational budget, in addition to the existing workforce, which is geared primarily towards sports ground and lawn management.**
h) **Ensure higher compliance levels with dog-walkers and fishers, to reduce injuries and risk to wildlife.**
i) **Install fenced off-leash dog walking area(s), as the park's ONLY off-leash area(s), to ensure best practice animal management in a park that contains protected native wildlife.**

The park's natural environment was the clear focus in 2019, when a Master Plan was released after 3-4 years of community consultation.



Theme one: Nature and environment

- A healthy park that will showcase the sustainable use of resources in a time of climate change
- Celebrate the importance of the lake as the heart of the park

Theme two: Community connections

- A welcoming park for everyone
- A healthy environment where people can connect with one another while being immersed in nature and culture

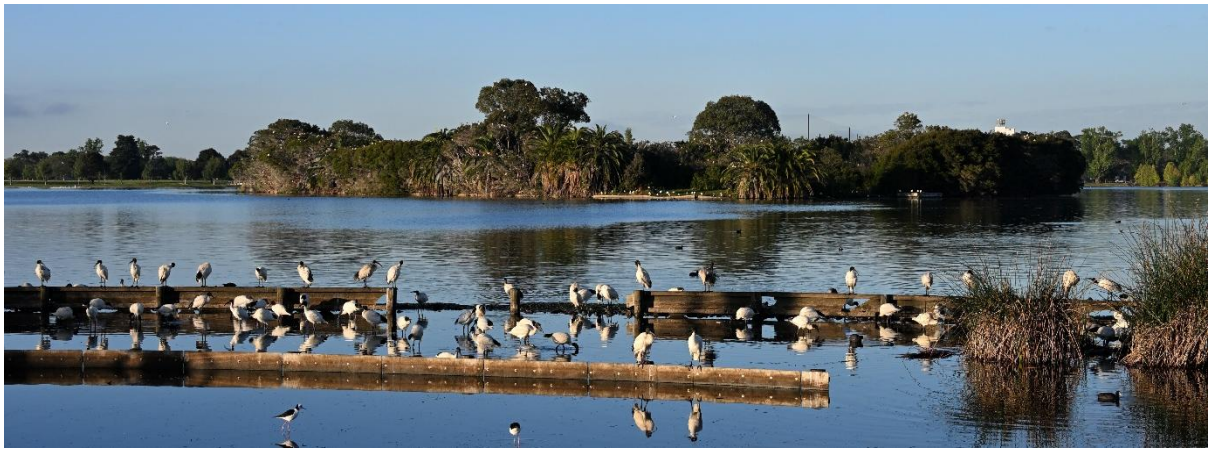
Theme three: Healthy and active

- An adaptable and diverse urban park that is enjoyed and valued for relaxation, sports and recreation.

PRIORITY 3: HEALTHY PARK ECOLOGY FOR HEALTHY PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE cont…

Since this Master Plan was released, we've witnessed the impact of climate change, avian botulism, and now deadly H5 bird flu, proving that urban park management can never be set and forget.

For example, Gunn Island was intended as a wildlife sanctuary in the changes of the 1990s, but it is now so overgrown and decayed that it has become ground zero for our avian botulism deaths.



Our self-sustaining, self-filtering water system of 2005 is now broken and spills untreated urban storm water into the lake.

From 1990 to now, 24 native species declined or vanished from Albert Park, including the Silvereye and Yellow-rumped Thornbill, charismatic former residents, that are now locally extinct.[4][5]






In 2025, the number of cygnets plunged to its equal lowest rate in 20 years of monitoring and study[6].

To put the "park" back in Albert Park, a healthier balance must be created between the park, sporting facilities and commercial activities.

Recreational park users already dominate park visits each year. The need for urban green breathing space is increasingly important as Melbourne turns to more apartment buildings to address the housing crisis.

The neglect of Albert Park must be stopped. Election candidates in 2026 have the opportunity to address this.

[4] 1990 records compiled by M.E. Talmage, cited in "Albert Park (The Vision) 1991, and 1994 Master Plan.
[5] eBird website used by "BOAPL – Birds of Albert Park" birders
[6] Swan census figures collected by Prof. Raoul Mulder, Melbourne University

PRIORITY 4: GREEN SPACE FOR OUR FUTURE

By 2030, Lake ALIVE! envisions an Albert Park where:

- **Recreational and sporting users of Albert Park will be working closely with Parks Victoria and AGPC for a healthier park environment and reduced damage.**
- **The Master Plan, the Lake Management Plan and the Sports Management Plan will be evolving into visible, genuine development for Albert Park's future.**
- **The Grand Prix Corporation will be accountable for demonstrating reduced impact on local residents and on the environment.**
- **The park's natural assets will be nurtured with a view to urban green space and canopy cover for a climate-challenged future.**
- **Wildlife diversity will be encouraged through planting and water management decisions.**
- **Park enhancements will be planned with artworks, improved seating and vantage points to make use of the public space, consistent with the Master Plan and global best practice.**

After the urgent health and maintenance priorities are addressed, the Master Plan can be fully realised, encapsulating a world-leading recreational park for 20,000+ visitors a day and a sporting reserve with state-of-the-art facilities for the 6000 club members who use the reserve each year.







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