

Ranges Trader Mail
Friday 27th May 2015

Olinda Golf Course

Prior to the 2014 election I committed to upgrading the Olinda pool precinct including a much needed regional playground facility in the hills. Continuing on from this commitment, we are now looking at a more extensive Olinda recreational precinct, taking in the recent upgrade of Olinda Football/Netball Club Recreation Reserve and the upcoming upgrade to the pool precinct.

I recently held a public meeting to discuss with the community their ideas for the future of the former Olinda Golf Course with over 200 local community members, representative of Yarra Ranges Council and representatives of Parks Victoria attending the evening. As a very significant area of public open space, there is a high level of interest within the community about its future use and it was fantastic to see so many engaged locals join in this discussion.

Chris Hardman - Regional Director Parks Victoria co-chaired the meeting and was thorough in his explanation about the possibilities for the area. There were some great ideas raised: off-lead dog area, footy/cricket ground, netball, tennis, tourism opportunities, community garden, business incubator, mountain biking, art programs and many more.

The Olinda Golf course was vacated back in 2012. Last year Parks Victoria instigated an 'Expressions of Interest' to examine any appropriate commercial activity on the site, this process has been stopped to evaluate and explore community and recreational uses for the benefit of all hills residents. This is an extraordinary opportunity to deliver a fantastic recreation space for our local community.

I have now arranged a meeting with Parks Victoria and Yarra Ranges to plan the way forward, using the ideas presented at the community meeting as a starting point. People who attended the meeting were given the opportunity to have their contact details added to an email list and this will be used to keep the community updated.

I encourage all hills residents to participate in this process to determine how this fantastic site can best deliver recreation opportunities for our community. If you have an idea please email me at james.merlino@parliament.vic.gov.au