



Make a hop for the best

Live within a leap of wetlands full of native neighbours, writes **Mary Costello**.

THE vulnerable and venerable growling grass frog lives in the growth corridor around Officer and Pakenham, and its habitat will be protected as residential estates proliferate in the area.

In designing its new Arena at Officer community, AVJennings has taken steps to rejuvenate Gum Scrub Creek and create a wetlands sanctuary, ensuring locals will become familiar with the growling "crawark-crawark-crok-crok" call of the warty little amphibian.

Arena was the first estate to be master-planned in Officer. More than a quarter of the 71-hectare development has been planned as open space — parks, walking and cycling tracks and native flora reserves. Arena and Central parks already offer attractive outdoor spaces and playgrounds. The two community sports ovals, a pavilion, picnic areas and multi-use hard court to come will provide facilities for active leisure within walking distance of all houses.

House sites for sale at the 673-block Arena are from 312 square metres to 809 square metres, priced between \$143,950 and \$208,950. The blocks, close to the wetlands sanctuary and future shops, are sited to optimise solar orientation of houses. All houses will be connected to class-A recycled water, residents are encouraged to plant natives and

the estate features energy-efficient street lighting.

There are plans for a shopping village and piazza at the corner of Princes Highway and Cardinia Road. For now, nearby Village Lakeside East offers Coles and Aldi supermarkets and other shops, takeaway outlets, cafes and restaurants. Arena is within a 10-minute drive of commercial centres at Pakenham, Cranbourne and Berwick, as well as the Fountain Gate shopping centre.

In some developing areas parents struggle to find schools but that is not the case in family-friendly Officer. There are quite a few schools here, some within walking distance of Arena, offering diverse educational options that reflect the mix of buyers attracted to the suburb.

Local schools include Pakenham Consolidated, Pakenham Lakeside, St Patrick's and St Brigid's primaries, Pakenham Secondary, Heritage, Minaret, Beaconhills Christian and Lakeside Lutheran colleges and Berwick Boys Grammar.

For wider choices, it's less than a 10-minute drive to Beaconsfield or Berwick, where you'll find St Margaret's School, Haileybury, Kambrya, St Francis Xavier and Berwick Secondary colleges, the new selective-entry Nossal High School and campuses of Monash University and Chisholm TAFE.

Arena is also well located when it

comes to sports and leisure. It's close to the Cardinia Life Aquatic and Recreation Centre, which has three pools, a health club and eight multi-purpose courts. Cardinia Life is part of a fitness precinct centred on the Toomuc Recreational Reserve, where facilities include sports ovals and an athletics track. For horse-lovers, the Cranbourne and Pakenham racecourses are within easy distance, there's a pony club at Officer and the Victorian Equestrian Centre is at Upper Beaconsfield.

Golfers can choose from courses at Pakenham, Berwick, Beaconsfield and Cranbourne. Footy fans will be able to follow the rise of the young Melbourne Demons, who train at nearby Casey Fields, which is developing as the leading sports facility in Melbourne's south-east.

Those interested in more passive pursuits will appreciate the Cardinia Cultural Centre at Lakeside Boulevard, Pakenham, which has a 350-seat theatre, a visual-arts wing, functions facilities, exhibition galleries and a lakeside restaurant.

Arena at Officer is about 52 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, between the Princes Highway and the Pakenham Bypass — a 45-minute drive, off-peak. The estate is just beside the Officer train station and the future station at Cardinia Road.



Arena

Address: Arena Parade, Officer
Agent: AVJennings, 131 878
Web: arena-at-officer.com.au
Prices: From \$143,950
Melway: 215 B5



The AVJennings development has sited its blocks to make full use of the sun and 25 per cent of the planned Arena estate will be open space