

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Clarke reserve Improvements

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Subject: Clarke Reserve Improvements

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Purpose

This Community Consultation Report summarises feedback received from the Clarke Reserve community consultation undertaken in October 2018. The findings of the consultation will help guide the proposed improvements to the reserve and playground.

Background

Concerns and suggestions for improvements were communicated to Council by the community about safety and the play experience in Clarke Reserve in early 2018. In response a council motion (CCM/7.11/18.07) was passed in July 2018 outlining the requirement to develop a landscape plan with the aim to resolve issues and consult with the community on proposed improvements to the reserve. Key improvements required by Council include:

- Install additional planting, edging and the supply and installation of a garden barrier around the section of playground fronting pedestrian footpaths.
- Install a new Children's slippery dip incorporated into an expanded playground area.
- Re-locate the existing plants from sections of the area overlooking the ocean adjacent to the coastal fencing on the Western side, and remove the larger trees that have grown alongside.
- Install permanent signage, that identifies Clarke Reserve as a 24/7 dog on-leash area, and that dogs are prohibited from being within 10 meters of any play equipment.

Community consultation was conducted from 22nd September – 26th October 2018 with Landscape Plans prepared to illustrate these improvements, refer to Appendix A. A consultation survey was drafted and a 'Have a Say Day' was held on Saturday 6th October, 2018. The consultation and survey were advertised on the Waverley Council 'have your say' website, social media and distributed on a flyer to letterboxes within a 400m radius of the reserve. A total of 68 survey responses were received; 62 online, 4 emails and 2 flyer responses. The consultation day was attended by approximately 11 residents and visitors. The detailed survey aimed to gather information on how people used the reserve and what they liked and disliked about the proposed improvements.

Following the 'Have Your Say Day' Council met with Precinct Convenors to discuss the proposed plans, provide clarification and listen to the community's response.

Key findings from the surveys include:

- Most respondents visit the reserve daily (54%) or visited weekly (36%).
- Most respondents visit for a short period, 30mins (42%) to 1 hour (31%).
- Respondents were generally dissatisfied with the existing reserve and playground (46%) or felt neutral (36%)

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- The most common activity undertaken in the reserve includes playing (45%) and walking (39%)
- Majority of respondents visited the park with children under the age of 6.

Discussion

In this section both written and verbal feedback is summarised into common themes. Each theme is accompanied by recommendations on how to incorporate the feedback into the improvement works.

Fencing

There was a strong view that fencing would improve safety, and address the issue of dogs wandering into the play space and children escaping and running on to Clarke Street. The proposed garden barrier solution including a low hoop fence within a garden bed was generally supported by the community and viewed as a good option to improve safety perceptions while retaining the reserves natural aesthetic. Feedback was also received that the proposed garden fence was not extensive enough with suggestions for a full height fencing extend around the perimeter of the play space.

Recommendations:

- Proceed with the proposed garden barrier fence around the perimeter of the play space to deter dogs from entering the playground and prevent children from wandering towards the street.
- Modify plans to overlap the garden fence at the entry to further deter dogs from wandering through the play space.
- Note that full perimeter fencing is not recommended as it encourages unsupervised play, reduces park permeability, discourages non-playground usage of the park and is cost prohibitive.

Signage

The implementation of new park signage including regulation information in regards to prohibited activity within the park, dog-on leash zones and restrictions was supported by the community. A large portion of people requested that the signs be installed as soon as possible to ensure dog owners and all reserve users are aware of regulatory requirements and to also allow for effect enforcement by Council Rangers.

Recommendations:

- Proceed with the proposed signage and fast track the installation to assist in the education of reserve users of regulatory requirements.

Play Equipment

The community responded in total support for the inclusion of a new slide and extended playground area. There was a strong view that the upgrades should include more play equipment for a range of ages and more multi-purpose pieces, concentrating mainly on areas for toddlers to play.

There was concern expressed around the safety of the swing set in particular the chain across the toddler seats. Some people requested the chain be removed and replaced with a safer restraint or seat type.

Recommendations:

- Expand on the proposed swing to provide a combination play unit which includes a slide and a variety of other activities to accommodate a wider range of park users.
- Refurbish the existing toddler seat chain restraint by incorporating padding around the chain and/ or including a clip for improved use.

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Trees, Planting and Shade

In general the plant species selected for the new garden beds and to refresh existing gardens around the playground was supported. While there was some concern that the proposed species may grow above 1m high and obstruct views out to the ocean, there was also a view that more shade should be provided around the playground. In particular increased shade cover over the play equipment was a common request at the open day and in survey responses. Some people requested shade sails or larger canopy trees while others were unspecific about the type of shade.

Feedback has suggested that some people would like to see all of the planting along the coast fence remove while others have requested for no plants to be removed.

Recommendations:

- Modify proposed shrub planting palette to ensure new plant species around playground do not exceed 1m high.
- As proposed remove sections of plants adjacent the coastal fence to allow access up to the fence. The removal of all the plants along the coastal fence is not supported as the plants currently act as a buffer zone between existing remnant native vegetation and the removal of the buffer planting will threaten the health of the remnant vegetation.
- Plant additional small canopy trees in the playground in locations that will best provide shade to children, species recommended is *Banksia integrifolia*.
- Shade sails are not recommended as they will obstruct views of residents and reserve users and the high installation and maintenance costs are not within budget.

Next Steps

Based on the recommendations outlined above the plans for improvements to Clarke Reserve have been modified to:

- Expand on the play experience of Clarke Reserve by installing a combination multi-play unit including slide.
- Amend the proposed shrub planting species to a limit of 1 metre high.
- Plant additional shade tree species around the playground.
- Overlap the garden barrier entrance to further deter dogs from entering the play space.