

Consultation Summary – Barracluff Park and Playground

From: Andrew Chau, Senior Landscape Architect
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Purpose

This Consultation Summary Report has been prepared to document findings of the Barracluff Park and Playground Upgrade community consultation which occurred from 15 April 2019 to 16 June 2019.

The report will detail the activities undertaken with the community during this period, provide a summary of the outcomes of the consultation activities, and the next actions for the project.

Background

Barracluff Park is a 15,000 sqm park in North Bondi, with a play space of 1,250 sqm. The park is bounded by Old South Head Road to the West, Warners Avenue to the Northern edge, Bondi Bowls club to the East, and private property to the Southern edge with the Bondi Mizrahi Synagogue in the Westernmost corner. The road closure and dedication of Simpson St behind to the Mizrahi Synagogue connects Barracluff Park to Beach Road.

The park caters to numerous activities, from active pursuits to passive recreation. The park also acts as a thoroughfare from Warners Avenue to the Bus stop on Old South Head Road.

A fence along the western edge, provides some protection from the traffic on Old South Head Road and the numerous trees to the western side of the park provide a visual buffer to the busy road, as well as ample shade for passive recreation. The playground and passive recreation area is separated from the remainder of the park by a slight embankment and a grove of olive trees. A large portion of the park is a turfed playing field with captured storm water irrigation, and sport lighting. The playing field is currently only suitable for soccer training as it has a limited area of approximately 70 x 60 metres. Consequently the field is booked to capacity in winter but rarely booked in the summer months.

Barracluff Park has had a greatly diminished play space following the removal of unsafe play equipment in 2017. The removed equipment had substantially failed the annual safety audit, and was deemed irreparable by the manufacturer.

Prior to the removal, the play space consisted of:

- a double swing set with toddler seat and sash seat,
- a cubby tower with ladder and fireman's pole,
- multi-play structure with climbing net, ladder, bridge, and slide,
- see saw, and
- spring rocker.

The play space is surfaced with an organic bark softfall mulch, and rubber mats were placed under the swing set. The only extant equipment is the seesaw and spring rocker.

The play space is identified as the last 'short term' play space to be upgrade in the Council adopted *Play Space Strategy*, the specific actions in the strategy to improve the park can be found in appendix 3.

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Consultation Methodology

Council officers pursued different avenues to inform the community of the upcoming project. These included a letterbox drop of flyers, direct emails to interested community members and community leaders, promotion in local print media in the Mayor's column, online via social media platforms, and physical signage at Barracluff Park.

Different means of joining the discussion were made available, including in-person at a *Have Your Say Day* at the Park, direct emails to the Open Space Planning team and responsible officer, comments on social media platforms, and submitting a survey online through the Council *Have Your Say* webpage.

Council officers provided assistance and direction on accessing the online *Have Your Say* webpage during the *Have Your Say Day* hosted at the park. Officers also had open discussions with community members, explained concept rationale, and took notes for consideration. Council officers talked to 38 people on the *Have Your Say Day*.

The period for joining the discussion and providing comments was from 15 April to 16 June, the *Have Your Say Day* in the park was on 5 May, between the hours of 9am to 12pm.

The information provided to the community for comment included analysis diagrams of the existing and proposed function of the park, an illustrative plan of the proposed play space, supporting imagery of precedent projects and designs from other built works in Sydney and abroad. This information could have been viewed at the *Have Your Say Day*, online at the *Have Your Say* webpage, on site on physical signage, and was emailed directly to interested community members. This information is appended to this report for reference, refer appendix 4.

Consultation Feedback Summary

The Waverley *Have Your Say* website received 675 visits, with 158 of those visitors downloading the draft concept. The online survey received 128 submissions in total, inclusive of formal responses from the *Have Your Say Day* and independently completed online surveys.

The consultation was designed to ascertain the types of play and activities the community wanted and would utilise in developing the play space upgrade. The consultation was not intended to get approval of a specific play space design, nor was it intended to ascertain community sentiment on the functions of the sporting field, change facilities, and dog recreation. As such, the questions in the survey are specific to the types of play preferred, and the types of active recreation complementary to play.

The survey did allow for the discussion of additional activities not included in the preliminary concept and items outside of the project scope. These have been considered and will be discussed in this report.

A snapshot of the community consultation results can be found in appendix 1.

Detailed summary of all survey responses can be found in appendix 2.

Discussion

Getting to and from the Park

Walking is the preferred mode of transport to Barracluff Park (107 of 125), this suggests the engaged users are local residents. The *Play Space Strategy* identifies the importance of the walking catchment area, with an ideal catchment of 15-20 minutes walk or an estimated 1km distance. The upgrade of the park and play space aims to provide better walking connectivity in the form of a footpath on Warners Avenue, as well as continuing the path to the bus stop on Old South Head Road. Public lighting will also be provided on this path link to the bus stop, providing added visibility in the evening.

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There were comments raising the concerns of insufficient car parking, the current number of spaces are already at capacity when just considering the residents on Warners Ave. There are concerns the impact will be compounded with the proposed upgrade of the park. The responses from the engaged users indicate a clear majority of users are not driving to the site.

Council officers investigated the feasibility of angled parking on Warners Ave. Adhering to Australian Standards for on-street parking, the change of parallel parking to angled parking does not increase the number of spaces without the significant loss of shade and visual amenity to majority of the Northern edge.

Council will be investigating the provision of accessible parking and path into the playground to meet best practice in inclusive design, actions identified in Council's adopted *Disability Inclusion Action Plan*, and requirements in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

How often and how long

Of the engaged users, visits to the park are predominantly weekly (57 of 129) and daily (42 of 129), with a duration between 30 minutes to an hour (93 of 125). This duration of stay is close to the desired length as guided by the *Play Space Strategy*. It is likely the length of stay will increase with the proposed play space upgrade, additional recreation activities, and extra ancillary infrastructure (drinking fountains, seats, picnic tables). The foreseeable impacts of this would be added strain on the maintenance of the space, the potential for lower turn-over of car parking, and the added need for a public toilet facilities.

Who is playing

Toddlers and junior children make up the majority of children of the engaged users, these children are aged from 0 to 9. This information is reflective of earlier data collected during the development of the *Play Space Strategy*. The upgraded play space is intended to provide activities for an even wider age range, ensuring the children of today have a place for recreation as they grow into teenagers.

Reviewing specific comments in relation to play experience for age groups, engaged users mentioned wanting more equipment for toddlers than shown in the draft concept, and commended the inclusion of a basketball court for senior children and teenagers, with the caveat netball should also be included.

What is play

When asked about the type of play experience preferred, engaged users preferred climbing, nature/wild play, swinging, and sliding. These preferences were expected, as the previous play space provided similar experiences and nature/wild play is becoming more popular in Sydney after the construction of the Centennial Park Wild Playground. The concept will be developed to allow for an increase of these play experiences in the form of additional equipment and spatial allocation. The lesser preferred play experience of rocking and spinning will still be included, however, the provision of these will remain on par to the previous play space.

What is exercise

When engaged users were asked which proposed recreational activity they would use, the most used activity would be the casual basketball court (63 of 107), followed by the circulation path for walking or running (55 of 107). The least likely to be used active recreation was the tennis rebound wall (34 of 107), and table tennis (35 of 107).

Discussions with the community revealed the table tennis would be less popular, due to the need for users to bring their own bat and ball, as well as the potential effect of wind. The tennis rebound wall was potentially less popular due to the proximity of full sized tennis courts at the neighbouring bowls club.

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The popularity of the casual basketball court was expected, gleaned from earlier data collected during the *Recreation Needs Study*, the *Play Space Strategy*, and from consultation for other playgrounds being upgraded in the area (Dickson Park, Thomas Hogan Reserve, Niblick Street Reserve). The consideration moving forward is how to integrate additional sports (like netball) without a large hardstand, as well as the potential impact of noise.

The proposal for the circulation path, and the alignment in particular, will be reviewed as a response to the consultation results. Initial discussions on site with community members indicated the path would not be used, and would not be a desired item in the design. However, the results indicate the contrary with majority of the engaged users specifying they will use the path. Only two detailed comments were received by engaged users opposing the path.

A further consideration of the circulation path is the future requirements of the field and the potential for expansion. The *Open Space and Recreation Strategy* currently underway will investigate this in more detail, and as such, the full extent of the circulation path will be deferred until the strategy is completed towards the beginning of 2020. The length of path along Warners Avenue will be constructed as part of this scope of works.

Dogs

In accordance with the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, dogs are prohibited to be 'within 10 metres of any playing apparatus provided in that public place or part for the use of children'¹, excluding assistance animals, Police dogs, or corrective services dogs. This legislation defines a physical area dogs shall not be allowed, leaving the rest of the park up for discussion. Currently, the playing field is signposted and recognised by Council as a dog prohibited area, however it is commonly used by dog owners for leash free exercise and relies on Council Ranger enforcement.

21 engaged users mentioned dogs when asked what they wanted to see in the future playground, with 11 requesting some form of dog exercise area, and the remainder highlighting the issues of off-leash dogs and dog refuse.

Provision and enforcement of dog off-leash areas are currently being investigated in the Waverley Council *Open Space and Recreation Strategy*. New park signage near the playground will clearly state dogs are prohibited to be within 10m.

Toilets and change facilities

An amenities building was mentioned by engaged users in detailed comments, citing the requirements of the sporting clubs or the reduction in time spent at the park due to lack of facilities. The *Play Space Strategy* identifies the ideal location of a district level play space to be in close proximity to toilets, an asset currently not at Barracluff Park.

This item is currently being investigated in the Waverley Council *Open Space and Recreation Strategy*, and the upgrade of the playground and park will consider spatial provision for a future amenities building.

Concept Design Development

The draft concept will be further developed in consideration of the above discussion, in particular;

- Inclusion of more play experiences for younger children, to better suit the current demographic;
- Removal of tennis table, and reduction of tennis rebound wall size, reflective of projected use;

¹ *Companion Animals Act 1998*, AustLII, viewed 8 July 2019

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/caa1998174/s14.html

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- Addition of netball and investigation of multiple goals (basketball and netball) to allow for more users whilst minimising area of hard surfacing;
- The circulation path along Warners Ave will be included in the revised concept, the extent wrapping around the oval will be deferred until the completion of the *Waverley Council Open Space and Recreation Strategy*.

Car-parking, off-leash dog recreation and toilet/change facilities will not be reviewed in this playground and park upgrade, as these items require additional investigation and a greater understanding of the provisions in the Waverley Council Area.

Next Steps

- Councillors and the community will be provided with this report.
- The concept will be updated to address community comments and insights, it will be circulated to those opted for updates, and uploaded to the *Have Your Say* webpage.
- The Have Your Say webpage and Current Projects page will be updated.
- The concept will be developed in preparation for construction.
- Construction is planned to commence Spring/Summer 2019.
- The community will be notified of any updates at 3-6 monthly intervals to the construction program as works progress.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Consultation Snapshot

Appendix 2 – Barracluff Park and Playground Upgrade Survey : Survey Report

Appendix 3 – Pages extracted from Waverley Council Play Space Strategy

Appendix 4 – Consultation Advertisement and Material

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Appendix 1 – Community Consultation Snapshot

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Appendix 2 – Barracluff Park and Playground Upgrade Survey : Survey Report

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Appendix 3 – Pages extracted from Waverley Council Play Space Strategy

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Appendix 4 – Consultation advertisement and materials