

6 Community Consultation



KEY FINDINGS

The following recommendations will inform future provision of inclusive play spaces in the Waverley LGA.

1. **Community Information:** The community will benefit from Council providing information on:
 - > What inclusive play is, what it looks like, and what it is not;
 - > The location of accessible and inclusive play spaces in the Waverley LGA, and to what degree they are accessible and inclusive; and
 - > Managing community expectations: while an individual inclusive play space can't provide every experience for everybody it should provide something that everyone can access and enjoy.
2. **Inclusive Play Recommendations:** Design principles for inclusive play provision have been derived directly from community requests and were common to all consultations:
 - > Design principles for inclusive play;
 - > Suitable types of accessible and inclusive play experiences; and
 - > Accessible amenities and supportive elements.
3. **Sets of Recommendations to Cater for Specific Age Groups:** Four (4) sets of design recommendations are provided across specific age groups as follows:
 - > Babies, Toddlers and Preschool Children (0-5 years);
 - > Children (5-11 years) with a disability;
 - > Young People (12-25 years) with a disability; and
 - > Older People (65+ years).
4. **Provision of Intergenerational Play Opportunities:** Design recommendations are provided for intergenerational play provision in inclusive play spaces, which include:
 - > Design principles for intergenerational play;
 - > Five (5) types of inclusive play experiences; and
 - > Supportive amenities and other elements.

6.1 Introduction

Community consultation is critical to the success of the Inclusive Play Space Study in reflecting the needs of the community in current and future provision of inclusive and accessible play spaces in Waverley LGA. This section highlights the key findings from community consultation – for a full analysis of the purposes of consultation, consultation methodology, who was consulted and how, and the key findings and recommendations, refer to Volume 2 Community Consultation Report.

Consultation methods were diverse, with the aim being to reach people who live with, work with, or support others with disabilities. Eight consultations were held with 173 community members, including children, young people, adults and older people with and without disabilities.

6.2 Key Outcomes from Community Consultation

The key outcomes from the consultations on inclusive play in the Waverley LGA are summarised below.

Respondents clearly identified 4 favourite play spaces for people with a disability in the Waverley LGA: Queens Park, Bondi Park, Bronte Park and Waverley Park. Nineteen (19) other play spaces were also mentioned but were not as popular.

The reasons why the above four parks were listed as favourites are:

- > Proximity to home or school;
- > Inclusive equipment and activities;
- > Fenced with secure gates;
- > Accessible paths and ramps;
- > Spaciousness;
- > Accessible parking; and
- > Designed with inclusive principles in mind (e.g. space to have time away from others if needed).

It is of note that the two favourite play spaces in the Waverley LGA for people with a disability are play spaces that have been specifically designed with Inclusive Principles in mind.

People with disabilities visit Waverley play spaces on a frequent basis. Many will visit a favourite play space weekly and stay for up to an hour in the play space. These visitors walk and drive to the play spaces they visit, with a smaller number (mostly teenagers) using public transport. A great range of people with disabilities visit the Waverley LGA playgrounds, from a variety of organisations: schools, childcare settings, disability organisations/services.

6.2.1 Catering for Inclusive Play

Inclusive Play Experiences

Consultations with various groups provided clear guidance about types of play experiences people would like in an inclusive play space as follows:

- > Cognitive play: intellectual challenges and puzzles;
- > Free play spaces: unencumbered grassed open areas;
- > Imaginative play: an overall themed setting or a smaller whimsical item;
- > Intergenerational play: activities that rely on interactions of different age groups;
- > Nature play: natural materials and equipment;
- > Physical play: different ways of being physically active;
- > Sensory play: natural materials and specialist equipment;
- > Side-by-side play: activities where participants play in close proximity to each other, but do not necessarily interact;
- > Social play: activities that work best with a group of people; and
- > Solo and quiet play: intimate spaces for watching others playing and having no prescribed program for play.

Inclusive Supportive Elements

In order for a play space to support a visit by people with disabilities, accessible supportive features should include shade, fencing of play space, nearby parking, nearby toilets, picnic tables, accessible paths, drinking water and group seating.

Provision for Different Age Groups

Separate consultations with different groups and organisations yielded clear results about provision of inclusive play spaces across all age groups as follows:

- > **Babies, toddlers and pre-school children (0-5 years):**
 - There is a general shortage of play experiences scaled for very small children in Waverley;
 - Small scale equipment at ground level (easily navigated with developing motor skills) is highly valued;
 - Carers would like safer access from car parks and roads, more supportive facilities for parking of strollers, washing hands, changing nappies, and flat surfaces for picnics; and
 - Children with sensory processing disorders would benefit from quiet spaces to withdraw from the noise and activity of a busy play space.
- > **Children (5-11 years):**
 - This Study focuses on meeting the requirements of children with disabilities;
 - Demand for an increase in sensory play (items that make sounds, textures to touch etc.), nature and water play (especially for children with sensory processing disorders), and a clear layout; and
 - Ramps, luminance-contrasted pathways, fencing, group seating, and accessible toilets and parking are mandatory amenities for this age group.
- > **Young People (12-25 years):**
 - Teenagers and young people with disabilities are typically under-catered for;
 - This group requires social seating and group play equipment (such as swings, hammocks and group see-saws) to facilitate social interaction; and

- This group needs sensory play opportunities, and individual solo play experiences e.g. a spinner for one person.
- > **Adults (25-65 years):**
 - There is a greater understanding of the need and capacity for adults to partake in play;
 - This group would like generous group seating, larger spaces for parties, accessible toilets, and convenient seats for supervision of others at play; and
 - They would like provision of scaled equipment with an “adult” aesthetic that provides challenging cognitive puzzles, physical exercises focusing on agility-based faculties (as opposed to muscle strength-based), and a range of group play equipment.
- > **Older People (65+ years):**
 - Older people value being in play spaces to accompany grandchildren, being active themselves, or simply watching children at play;
 - Play forms an important role in keeping older people active in their community; and
 - There is great interest and benefit in provision of outdoor play equipment for older people to maintain and boost both physical and mental wellbeing, and hence provide a role in preventative health and rehabilitation activities.

Building Social Capital Through Inclusive Play

The consultation survey and sessions provided feedback from the communities regarding the value of play spaces as places where Council can invest in building social capital.

People are Interested in Inclusive Play

A high level of engagement (40% of responses) to the online survey was from people who do not have a lived experience of disability (i.e. do not themselves have a disability, have friends or family with a disability, or care for a person with disability). This indicates community-wide interest in inclusive play.

Specific comments in the survey from this group of respondents indicate that people in general would like to see play spaces designed for everybody to use, regardless of age, gender, or disability. This suggests that the residents and visitors to Waverley LGA are sophisticated and aware in their desire to build social capital through inclusive play spaces.

Enthusiasm for Intergenerational Play

There is growing awareness and demand for opportunities for adults to participate in playful experiences with children in the public domain. For example, parents, grandparents and children may like to play together on a large spinner. The community is enthusiastic about the health benefits of intergenerational play (e.g. being more physically active). They also value the social community-building aspects of facilitating play across the generations.

Communication and Education Regarding Inclusive Play

A clear outcome from the community engagement is the need for online and on-site communication about Waverley’s inclusive play spaces. Websites and signage should communicate the inclusive benefits and intent of a play space. Further education and information regarding inclusive play should be offered on Council’s website.

Community Perception of Inclusive Play

Findings suggest that some members of the community want to see an overt commitment to catering for disability in play spaces, which in turn engenders pride in Council achievements for inclusive play. The ‘take-home’ message here is that Council could communicate more clearly about the look and feel of inclusive play spaces, to help the community recognise and take pride in current and future inclusive play outcomes in the LGA.

More Inclusive Play Spaces Can Provide More Facilities for More People

Respondents indicated that an increase in the number of inclusive play spaces across the Local Government Area would be appreciated. A focus on more inclusive play spaces and diligent attention to design would result in more inclusive play spaces appealing to and serving the needs of a greater percentage of the population.