

# 1 Overview of Consultation Methodology



## 1.1 Background

Waverley Council adopted the **Play Space Strategy 2014-2029** in November 2014, a 15-year strategy that guides the ongoing development of the forty (40) play spaces in the Local Government Area (LGA). The vision for play spaces includes Principles and Strategies to guide play space development, sets the hierarchy for play space provision, nominates a priority listing for upgrades, and provides an Action Plan to guide specific upgrades in identified play spaces.

The Play Space Strategy establishes that principles of universal design, accessibility, socially inclusive play and best practice design for play are considered in the development of Council's play spaces. However, the Strategy does not specify how or where this may be achieved. This lack of clarity led to approaches from the community, requesting Council integrate inclusive play principles into existing and future play spaces in the LGA. The community perceived that:

- there was a lack of accessible play spaces in the LGA; and
- that the Play Space Strategy did not adequately address inclusive play provision.

The Play Space Strategy sits within an integrated strategic planning framework as follows:

- The **Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029** was adopted in June 2018 and addresses the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights, the key actions of which are directly applicable to play spaces. The Plan identifies the priorities and aspirations of the community, providing a clear set of strategies to achieve this vision of the future. It further identifies the parties responsible for its implementation, including State agencies, non-government organisations, business partners and community groups.
- The **Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021** was endorsed in 2017. The Plan established Council's commitment to providing inclusive and liveable communities while setting out the actions and priorities for maintaining and improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities. Australian Access and Mobility Standards as well as Universal Design Principles underpin the design of new Council assets and open spaces.

### 1.1.1 The Waverley Inclusive Play Space Study

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects (FRLA) and Parkland Planners were engaged to produce the **Waverley Inclusive Play Space Study**. The purpose of the Inclusive Play Space Study is to provide strategic direction on how Council's existing play spaces can be developed to meet the intent of the NSW Department of Planning 'Everyone Can Play' guidelines, Councils D.I.A.P (2017-2021), as well as the intent of the Disability and Discrimination Act. The overall intent is to provide equitable and inclusive playgrounds to meet the overall community's needs.

The resulting Inclusive Play Strategy will be a supporting document to Council's adopted 'Play Space Strategy 2014-2019'. The objectives of the Study are as follows:

- To provide spaces where everyone can play in the Waverley LGA;
- To define inclusive and accessible play in the Waverley context;
- To engage with the community and stakeholders regarding their needs and aspirations for inclusive and accessible play and incorporate these into the study's recommendations and actions;
- To guide Council in strategic decisions relating to the provision and upgrading of play spaces to be inclusive and accessible to everyone;
- To develop an overarching Vision and Principles for inclusive play applicable to all Council play spaces;
- To develop a targeted Action Plan that aligns with the existing Play Space Strategy's hierarchy of play spaces and priority scheduling of capital works; and
- To develop an implementation plan prioritising actions, suggesting timeframes and suggesting responsible partnering and possible strategic partnerships.

Additional objectives:

- To provide clear design language, principles and associated deliverables regarding inclusive play;
- To provide an international, national and state context of inclusive public play spaces, and indicate Waverley Council's position in this context;
- To ensure that the targeted Action Plan which demonstrates which play spaces will be retrofitted to be inclusive, and generally how this will be done (general guidance, not specific design);
- To develop Inclusive Play Space principles and evaluation criteria for play spaces in the Waverley Council LGA; and
- To provide a supporting document to the adopted Play Space Strategy 2014-2019.

### 1.1.2 Inclusive Play and Terms Used

#### **Inclusive Play Space:**

An Inclusive Play Space offers robust recreational and social opportunities for all people regardless of differences in abilities, age, culture or gender. An inclusive play space accommodates everyone inviting people to be included in the play experience, play socially, choose from a range of activities and challenge themselves at their own development level. An inclusive play space can't provide every experience for everyone but should provide something that everyone can access and enjoy.

"Inclusive" is an umbrella term that caters for all accessibility, disability and special needs requirements.

#### **Accessible:**

Adjustments made to buildings, equipment and public spaces to ensure that people with a disability can access and use buildings and public spaces, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act and Australian Standards. Accessibility is a subset of inclusivity – in other words, inclusive designs are inherently accessible.

#### **Disability:**

A person with a disability is someone who is permanently physically, intellectually or neurologically injured or incapacitated and requires assistance of appropriate aids or services to move, communicate, or take care of themselves. Disabilities are often divided into 'disability groups' such as physical and mobility, learning and cognition, sensory processing, and vision or hearing.

#### **Special Needs:**

An individual with special needs is someone with a physical, intellectual or neurological impairment (as distinct from an incapacity) who may need help with movement, communication, self-care or decision making. For example, an elderly person may have impaired movement, vision or hearing that requires additional support to navigate a play space but would not be considered disabled. Children with ADHD, mild to moderate autism or behavioural difficulties would not be considered disabled, and yet still have special needs to support their functionality in life, school and playgrounds.



## 1.2 Consultation Methodology for the Inclusive Play Space Study

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 the Waverley LGA. Council, FRLA and Parkland Planners collaborated to develop a community consultation and engagement plan to ensure the community and stakeholders were aware of the project and empowered to have their say in its development. A number of communication channels and engagement tactics were selected to ensure effective engagement, particularly with people with disabilities (intellectual, physical, sensory) in all age groups and with carers and families; and with relevant government and non-government service providers, childcare centres and schools, seniors groups, and other relevant community organisations.

### 1.2.1 Objectives of Engagement

The aim of the study was to undertake targeted community and stakeholder engagement to directly consult with residents and visitors of the Waverley LGA who would most benefit from the inclusive outcomes of the study, while recognising that improving the inclusiveness of Council's play spaces provides benefits for everyone in the community.

Objectives for community and stakeholder engagement for this study were to:

- Engage with stakeholders and the community about improving opportunities for inclusive play in Waverley LGA;
- Determine the aspirations and expectations of people with disabilities, carers and families, service providers and community organisations for achieving inclusive play outcomes; and
- Obtain feedback from diverse and interested stakeholders and community members.

This project is considered as a “good news” project which will have many benefits for the community. As such it was anticipated the project would receive positive community support.

### 1.2.2 Methods of Engagement

Community engagement underpins the Inclusive Play Space Study. This report evaluates the first round of consultation during the period of 1 July – 30 September 2019. The following methods and channels of engagement were used for the first round of consultation for this study:

- **Have Your Say Project Page:** Specifically hosted for this study, containing the Project Overview, Additional Information, Key Dates, links to On-line Survey, FAQ.
- **Online Survey:** To engage the sector of the community that deals with or supports children and adults with disabilities and special needs (open from 1 July – 18 August 2019, 116 responses).
- **Focus Group Workshop:** For stakeholders to provide face-to-face input to the study. Held on 22 July 2019. One person (Team Leader, Open Space and Recreation Planning, Woollahra Municipal Council) registered and attended. During informal discussions, she expressed interest in the outcomes of the study for similar work in Woollahra LGA. There was no formal presentation.
- **Email notification to 48 key stakeholders:** To invite input and participation via the Online Survey and Focus Group Workshop (18 local schools, 8 Local Government Councils, 4 State Government organisations, 18 organisations supporting people with disabilities).
- **Social Media:** Four (4) Facebook notifications were posted, with links to the study on Council's Have Your Say Page (4,108 people reached).

- **Consultations:** With three (3) key target organisations to gain insights on inclusive play experiences and wishes for older people and local parents (Uniting War Memorial Hospital, Local Resident Inclusive Play Advocate and Wairoa School).
- **Special Excursions:** With three (3) organisations to observe how preschool children, primary school children and young people with a disability and their carers access play spaces. Gain insights into what experiences and amenities are suitable, engaging and foster being able to stay longer in the play space (Holdsworth Community, Wairoa School and Waverley Family Day Care).
- **Discussions with three (3) play space providers:** On provision of inclusive play in adjoining areas (Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, Randwick Council, Woollahra Council City of Sydney Council).
- **Waverley Council Access Committee:** Were briefed twice (at commencement of the consultation period in September to present the results of Round 1 consultation). Generally, they are in support of the project and consultation process with the study outcomes being driven by users who will greatly benefit from the outcomes.
- **Council Newsletters:** The study was mentioned twice in the general e-newsletter sent 3 July 2019 to 1,336 recipients, and the engagement e-newsletter sent to 1,678 recipients.
- **Newspaper:** The study was mentioned twice on the Council page of the Wentworth Courier (10 and 31 July 2019).

The second round of consultation will ascertain feedback on the Study once drafted.

### 1.2.3 Engagement Statistics from Online Promotion

The following statistics summarise public engagement from promotional channels including the Have Your Say website, four Facebook postings, and two Council e-newsletters.

**TABLE 1.1**

	<b>Aware (Visited the web page/Had post in Facebook feed/Received Council Email)</b>		<b>Informed (Clicked on something)</b>
Have your Say Website	Accessed HYS website	305	24
Facebook	Total reached over 4 posts	4,108	75
Council E-Newsletters	Total reached over 2 e-newsletters	2,914	-

## 1.3 Overview of Community Consultations

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects (FRLA) are specialists in the planning and design of play spaces for people of all ages, cultures and abilities. This includes consultation with children, young people and adults about their needs and desires in play spaces. The following consultations were held in collaboration with Waverley Council to gather input from the community to ensure that the Study caters for people of all ages and abilities in Waverley's play spaces. In total, 173 people were consulted across 8 consultations, as follows:

**TABLE 1.2**

Interest Group/Area	Consultation	Date (2019)	People Consulted	Details
Local Community and Service Providers to people with a Disability	Community Survey	1 July – 18 August	116 respondents, of which 60 completed the survey	Appendix A Appendix B
Preschool Children	Waverley Council Family Day Care excursion to Clemenson Park	11 September	7 Educators for Waverley Council Family Day Care and 14 children aged 0-4 years	Appendix C
Children and Young People with a Disability	Lifestart	15 August	One staff member speaking on behalf of all staff providing support services to 0-24 year-olds with disabilities and their families/carers	Appendix D
Local Resident Inclusive Play Advocate	Parent phone consultation	7 August	1 Parent living in Waverley LGA providing input on inclusive play spaces	Appendix E
School Students with a Disability	Wairoa School	20 September	1 Assistant Principal	Appendix F
		26 September	5 teachers and 11 children aged 5-10 years	
Young People (Teenagers) with a Disability	Holdsworth Community Excursion to Bondi Beach	10 August	7 males and 4 females aged 13-18 years with Autism, Down Syndrome, Anxiety, Depression 5 support workers	Appendix G
Older People	Uniting War Memorial Hospital	15 August	Two staff members running activity groups (average age 73) and rehabilitation services (average age 85)	Appendix H
Intergenerational Play	South Eastern Local Health District Submission via Email	8 August	Carmel Moses, Population Project Officer	Appendix I

## 1.4 Purpose of the Report

This Report summaries the key findings and recommendations resulting from the above public consultations. It outlines the community's preferences and desires for providing accessible and inclusive play experiences for different user groups that visit, live and work in the Waverley LGA. The findings have been used to generate recommendations for inclusive play provision in the Waverley LGA.



## 2 Summary of Online Community Survey





## 2.1 Introduction

An online Community Survey was specifically designed for this study by FRLA in collaboration with Waverley Council. The purpose of the survey was to give a voice to the local community about inclusive play in Waverley LGA, as well as gather vital input from people with a disability or special needs, their carers and organisations providing services in the disability sector.

The survey was launched on 1 July 2019 through Council's Have Your Say website portal with links being promoted on social media such as Facebook pages. Waverley Council also emailed letters to invite participation from key stakeholders such as organisations who provide services to, or advocate for, people with disabilities and their families and carers. It was open for 49 days until 18 August 2019.

The survey comprised 22 questions, 16 of which were multiple choice, 2 were open-ended questions and 4 gathered demographic information. 116 people started the survey, and 58 (50%) completed the 17 questions in the survey (see below for details).

This section will describe how target groups were defined for inclusion in the study. Thereafter an overview of the survey results will be provided and the implications for providing more inclusive play spaces in Waverley will be explored.

Four main areas of results are discussed:

1. Profiles of respondents from target groups of the study;
2. Profiles of respondents from other groups (not target groups) of the study;
3. Usage patterns of play spaces in Waverley LGA by people with a disability (from target groups only); and
4. Preferences and ideas for making Waverley's play spaces more inclusive and accessible - a comparison of those who did and did not meet criteria.

Refer to Appendix A for the Community Survey Questionnaire.



## 2.2 Identifying Respondents from Target Groups for the Inclusive Play Space Study

Specific target groups were identified by the project team, and criteria were developed to define these in the survey (See Figure 2.1 below). Broadly speaking, target groups were defined for people who have a disability, care for people with a disability, provide support services for people with a disability or have experience or interest in providing inclusive play opportunities. Non-target group respondents are those with no lived experience of disability as regards themselves or others.

Community consultation was based on the assumptions that:

- Improvements to access and inclusion in play spaces would benefit everyone in the community;
- Previous research, play strategy consultation, numerous case studies and literature have established the requirements of play space users who do not have a disability – hence consultation was deliberately aiming to fill-in the missing information; and
- This study is part of a broader consultation process, and Council re-engages with the community regarding individual play spaces when they fall due for redevelopment or upgrading.

The survey structure was as follows:

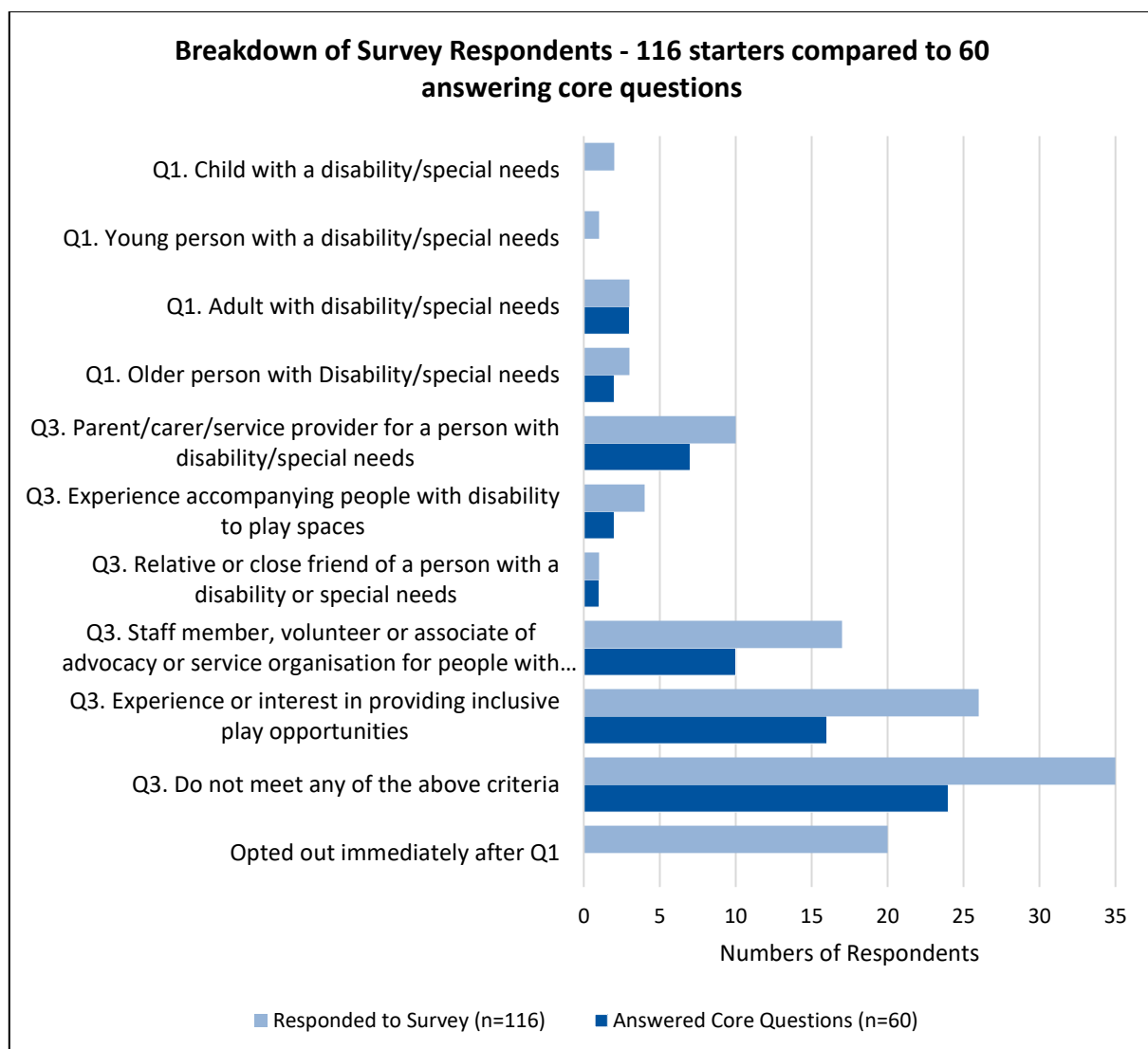
- **Question 1 – Question 8** identified and filtered relevant target groups for inclusive play (see Figure 2.1 below) completed by 116 respondents;
- **Question 9 – Question 14** identified usage patterns of target groups visiting Waverley's play spaces (completed by 20 respondents);
- **Question 15 – Question 18** were core questions of the survey asking for preferences and ideas for more inclusive and accessible play spaces in the Waverley LGA (completed by 60 respondents); and
- **Question 19 – Question 22** were general demographic questions (completed by 48 respondents).

Non-target group respondents skipped straight to question 15 to answer the core questions related to their preferences and ideas for inclusive and accessible play in Waverley. In this way, all sectors of the Waverley community were given a say about inclusive play, as well as relevant disability sectors beyond the Waverley LGA.

## 2.3 Breakdown of Responses for Each Target Group for the Survey

As shown in Figure 2.1 below, 116 people started the survey, and 60 people (52%) completed at least one question about their preferences for accessible and inclusive play spaces in Waverley LGA. Twenty (20) opted out immediately after the first question, and another 36 respondents did not progress beyond the initial eight filtering questions. This suggests that respondents opted out of their own accord when they did not identify as one of the target groups of the Inclusive Play Space Study.

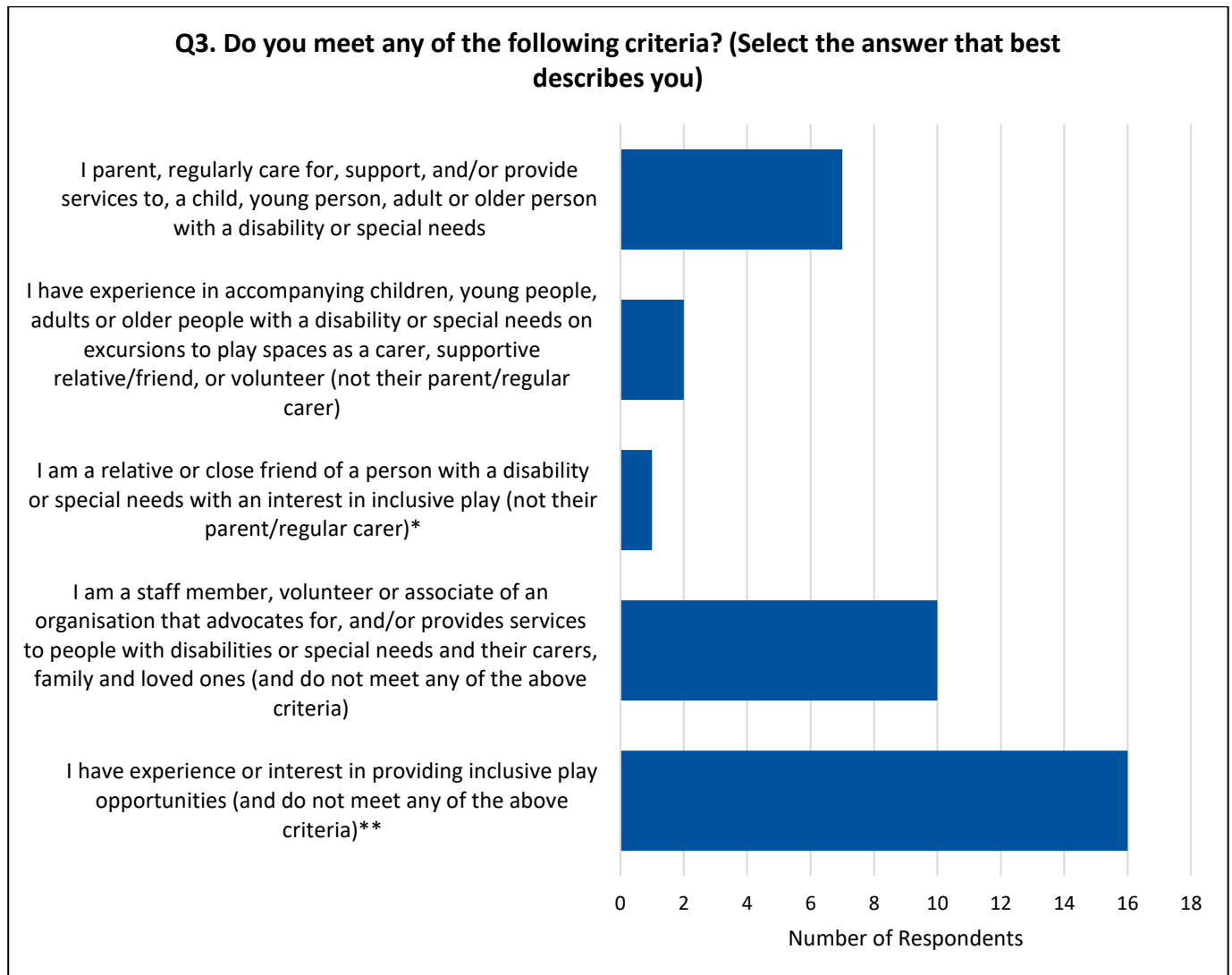
The graph also shows that of the 116 people who started the survey, 61 (53%) respondents were in the target groups of the study by having a disability (9), caring for or supporting people with a disability or special needs (32), or having experience or interest in inclusive play provision (26). Of note is that of the 60 people who answered the core questions, 36 (60%) were in the target groups for the study. Overall, the breakdown of respondents suggests that those who did answer the core questions had a genuine and bona fide interest in the provision of inclusive and accessible play for the Waverley area, regardless of whether or not they live or work with disability.



**FIGURE 2.1**

## 2.4 Profiles of Respondents from Target Groups of the Study

A total of 61 people met the criteria of the target groups of the study as identified in Questions 1 and 3. The three responses from children and young people under 18 years did not progress beyond the initial eight screening questions, and hence did not provide their input on their play space usage patterns or their ideas for making Waverley's play spaces more inclusive or accessible. The remaining 58 people met the criteria for Question 3 as follows:



**FIGURE 2.2**

\* This person is an adult with a disability

\*\* Includes two adults with a disability and two older people with a disability



### 2.4.1 Age Groups and Types of Disabilities or Special Needs

Target group respondents were asked about the nature of their disability or special needs in order to inform the study of the range of disabilities to be catered for in Waverley's play spaces. Three (3) groups of respondents indicated the following spread of the types of disability or special needs – note that each respondent may have more than one type of disability or special need:

**TABLE 2.1**

Type of disability	Children/ Young people under 18 with a disability  (N = 3)	Adults/ Older people with a disability  (N = 6)	Parents, carers or service providers to people with disability (N = 24)	Total Respondents with Type of Disability  (N = 33)
Physical disability or impairment	2	5	17	24
Intellectual disability or impairment			14	14
Sensory processing disorder e.g. Autism, ADHD	2		14	16
Blindness or vision impairment		2	10	12
Deafness or hearing impairment			11	11
Ongoing debilitating health condition e.g. cancer, heart condition, diabetes, chronic illness		2	10	12
Other Disability or impairment requiring special provisions (please specify): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parkinson's Disease x2</li> <li>• Dementia x2</li> <li>• Rehabilitation post-surgery, falls prevention, frailty, declining balance and mobility, stroke</li> </ul>			4	4

When the data was examined for age groups (as shown in Table 2.2), most respondents cared for, or provided services to, a mix of age groups. There were only five (5) respondents who only look after adults, four (4) respondents who only look after children with a disability, and no respondents who only look after young people with a disability. It is hence not possible to determine the spread of disabilities by age group.

**TABLE 2.2**

Age Groups	Q8. Children/ Young people under 18 with a disability  (N = 3)	Q2. Adults/ Older people with a disability  (N = 6)	Q7. Parents, carers or service providers to people with disability  (N = 24)	Total  (N = 33)
0-4 years (preschool)			11	11
5-11 years (primary school)	2		15	17
12-17 years (high school)	1		12	13
17-24 years (young people)			7	7
25-65 years		3	7	10
Over 65 years		3	7	10

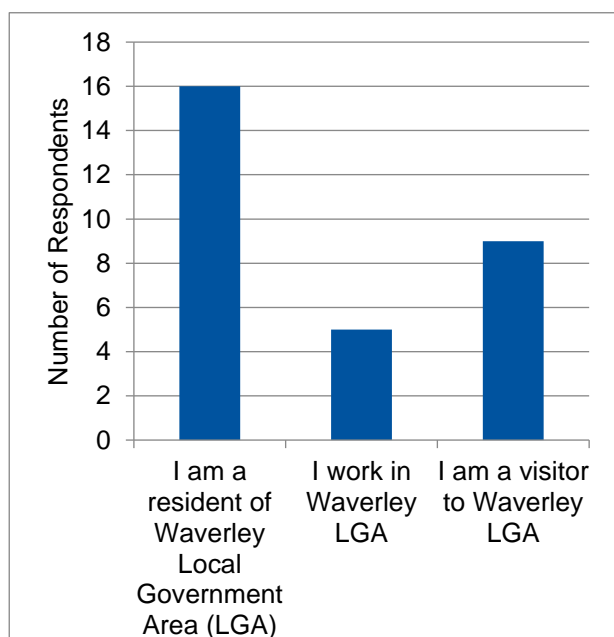
### 2.4.2 Demographics of Respondents from Target Groups of the Study

30 (54%) of the 56 target group respondents answered the final demographic questions at the end of the survey.

As shown in Figure 2.3 below, 70% of respondents live or work in the Waverley LGA, and one third of respondents are not necessarily familiar with the Waverley LGA as they are visitors. This finding was supported by a few respondents who indicated they were not familiar with all the names of the play spaces. All respondents were adults over 25 years old and that 10% of respondents were older people (over 65).

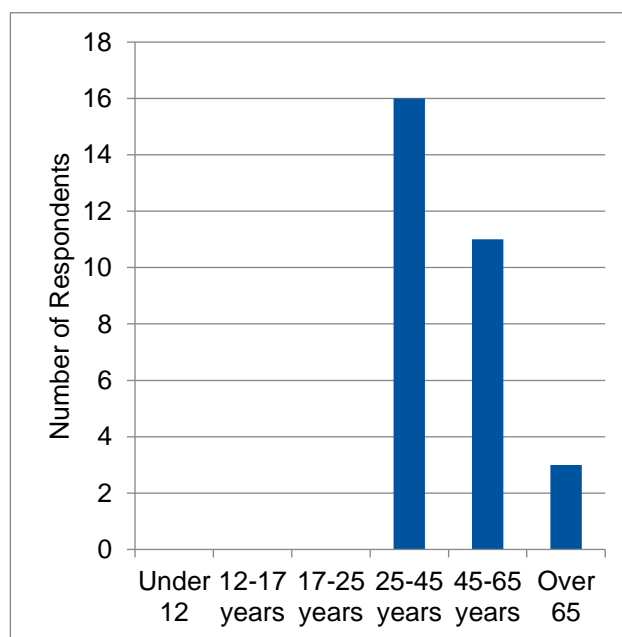
#### Q19. Which of the following best describes you?

(30 responses)

**FIGURE 2.3**

#### Q20. What is your age?

(30 responses)

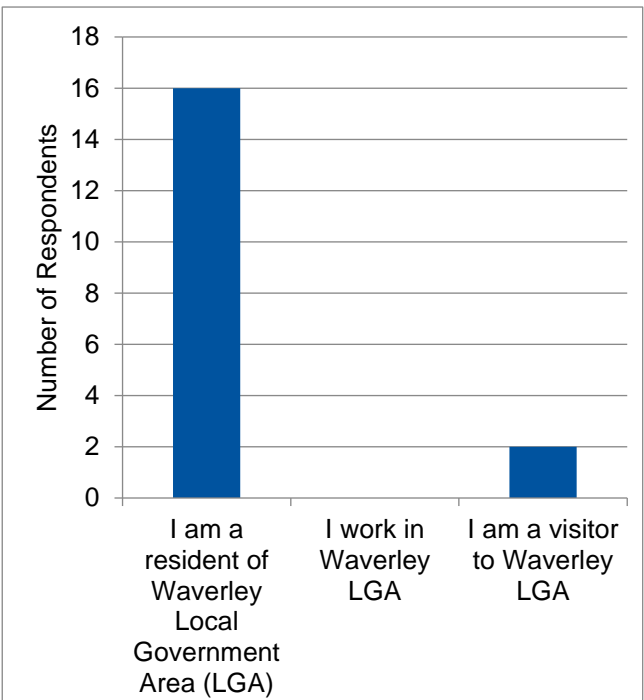
**FIGURE 2.4**

# 2.5 Profiles of Non-Target Group Respondents of the Study

The Survey was designed to skip non-target group respondents past questions that did not relate to them such as type of disability and play space usage patterns of people with a disability. 18 (50%) non-target group respondents answered the demographic questions at the end of the survey. The results in the graphs below show that most of these respondents were Waverley residents aged 25-65 years –the data from the non-target group therefore mainly reflects the views of adult residents in the Waverley LGA.

**Q19. Which of the following best describes you?**

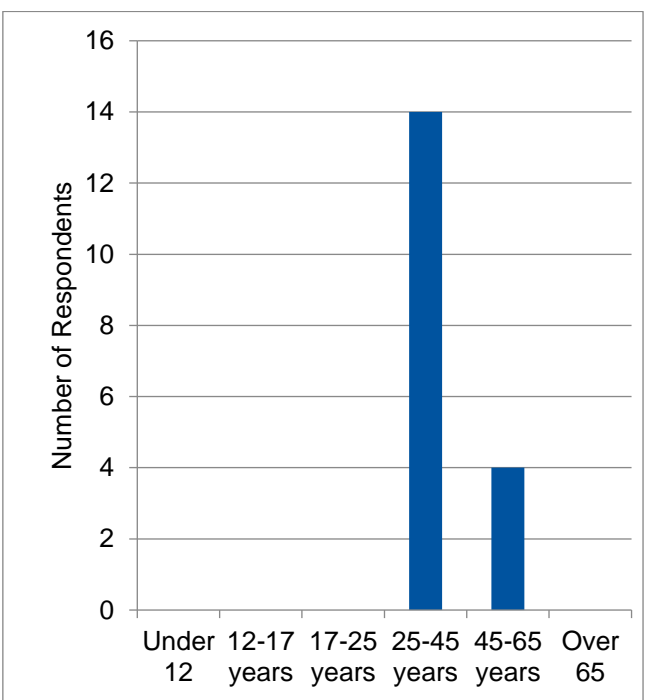
(18 responses)



**FIGURE 2.5**

**Q20. What is your age?**

(18 responses)



**FIGURE 2.6**



## 2.6 Usage Patterns of Play Spaces by People with a Disability

Forty-seven (47) of the 58 target group respondents progressed to answer questions about their usage patterns of play spaces in the Waverley area (as shown in Figure 2.7 - Figure 2.9 below). 20 respondents (42%) indicated that they never visited play spaces in Waverley and hence skipped further questions about play space usage patterns. A further seven (7) respondents opted out of the survey after Question 9, leaving twenty (20) who went on to answer further questions about play space usage patterns.

Figure 2.7 indicates that people with a disability visit play spaces often, with nearly half (45%) visiting weekly or more often, and almost two thirds (63%) visiting at least monthly.

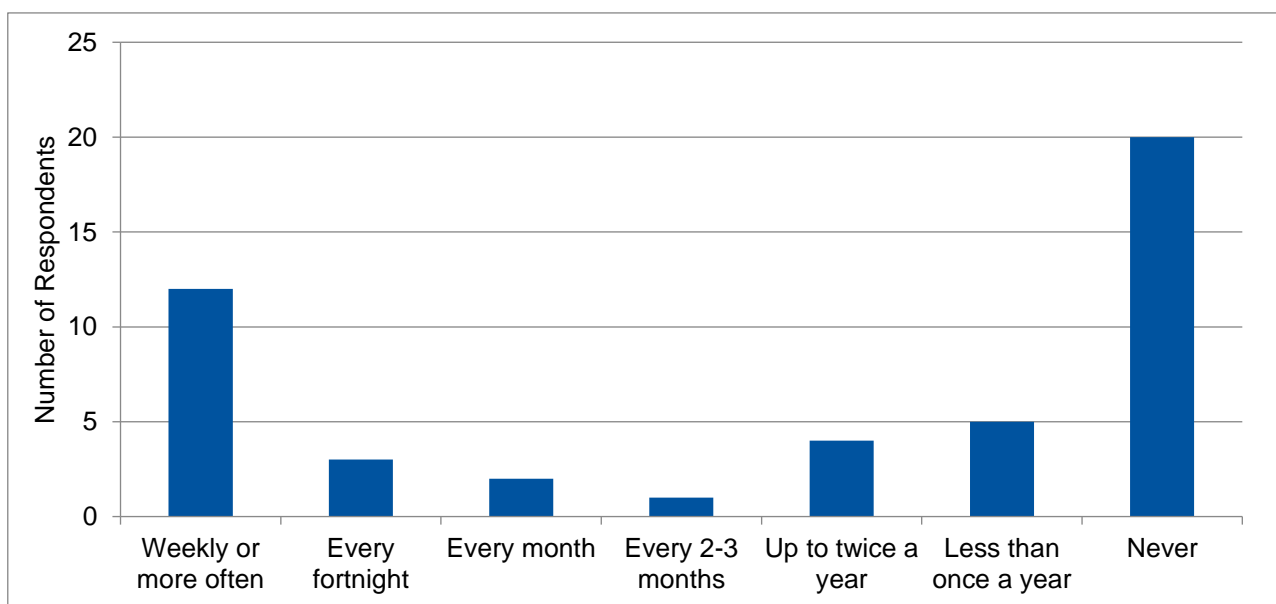
Figure 2.8 shows that people with a disability tend to spend longer on play space visits than findings from other surveys with the general population. Almost two thirds (60%) of respondents spend up to an hour when they visit a play space, and only 10% visit a play space for less than 15 minutes.

Figure 2.9 shows that, whilst many target group respondents (55%) use local play spaces that they can walk to, the vast majority (87%) of people will travel to a play space by car or bus – suggesting strong demand for accessible parking (linked to accessible paths) to play spaces.

Overall, these results indicate that play spaces are a popular and frequent destination for people with a disability, and that there is genuine demand for inclusive play spaces in Waverley. With these people choosing to access play spaces frequently and stay longer, there is likely to be a strong need to provide support facilities to make this possible for people with a disability (e.g. toilets, seating, shade, accessible parking, accessible paths etc).

**Q9: In general, how often do you visit a play space in the Waverley area with a child, young person, adult or older person with a disability or special needs?**

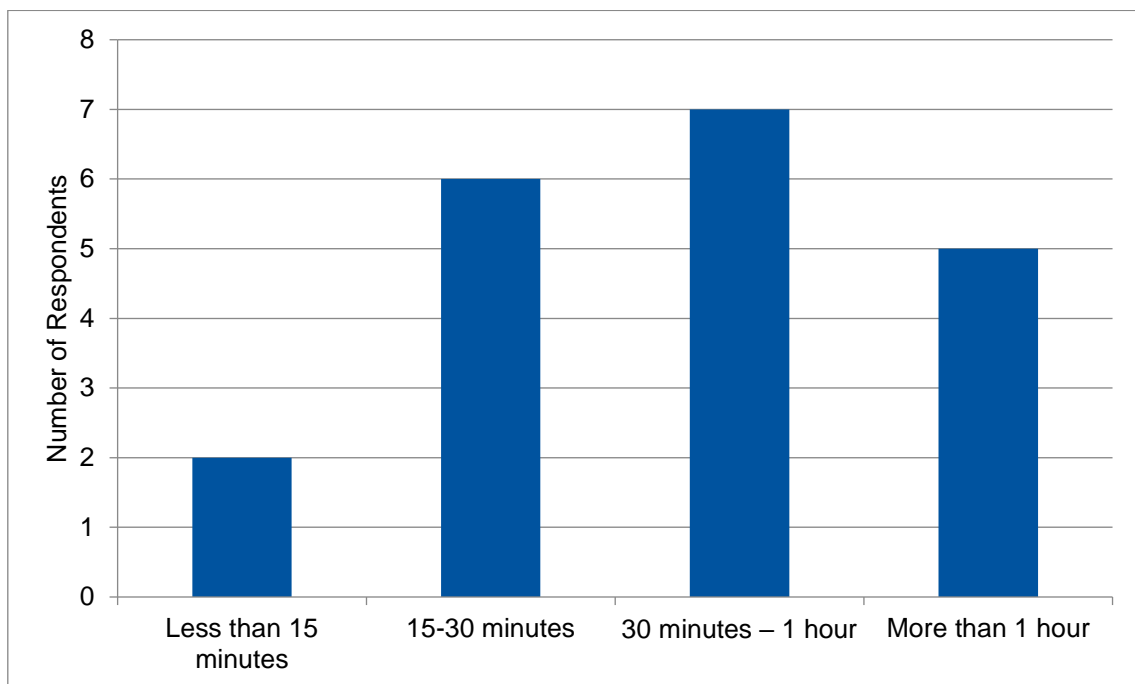
(47 responses)



**FIGURE 2.7**

**Q13: How long do you spend on average at play spaces each time you visit with children, young people, adults or older people with a disability or special needs?**

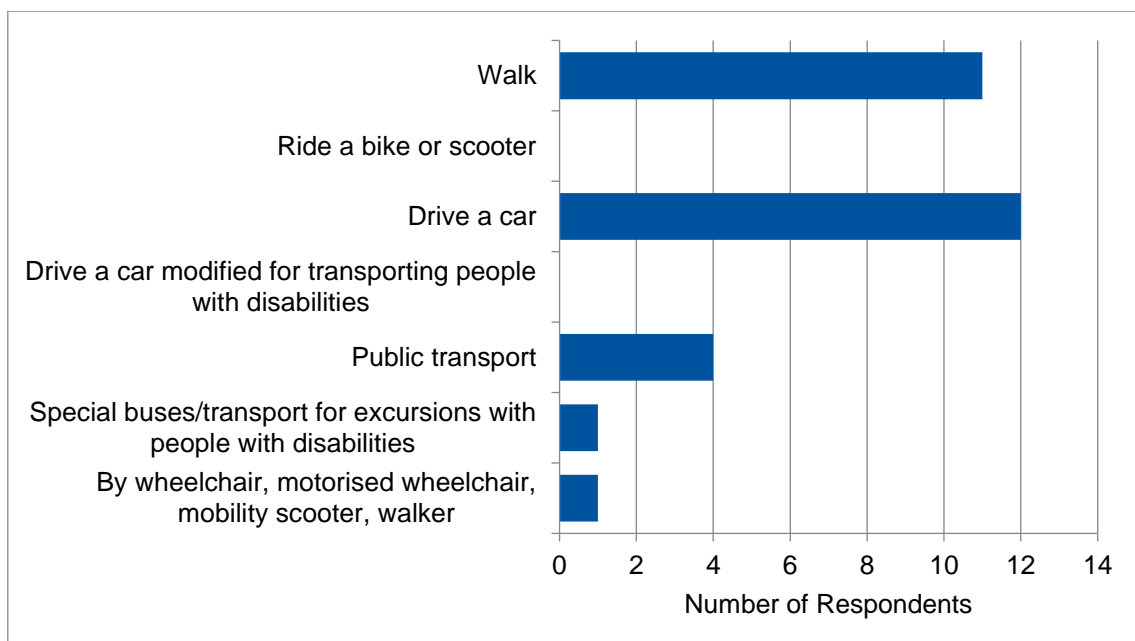
(20 responses)



**FIGURE 2.8**

**Q14: In general, how do you travel to play spaces with a child, young person, adult and/or older person with a disability or special needs? Please select all that apply to you.**

(20 responses)

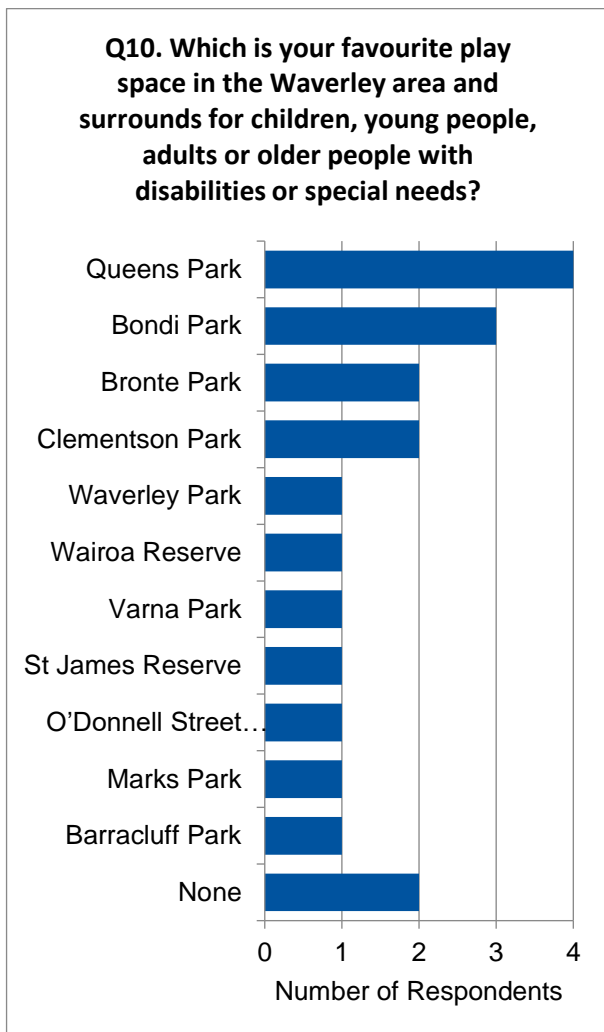


**FIGURE 2.9**

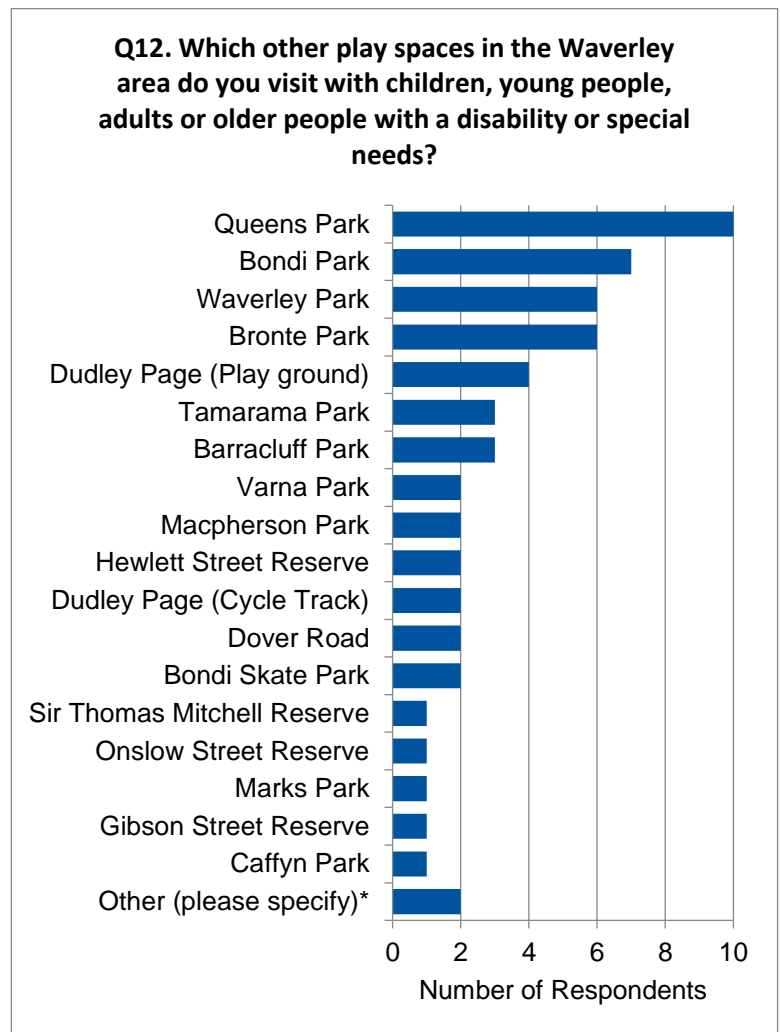
## 2.7 Favourite Play Spaces in the Waverley Area for People with Disabilities

Twenty (20) target group respondents who visit play spaces in Waverley answered questions about the play spaces they visit. The full list of 39 play spaces in the Waverley area is shown in Appendix A.

The graphs below show the favourite play spaces visited by people with a disability (Figure 2.10), as well as other play spaces visited by people with a disability in Waverley area (Figure 2.11):



**FIGURE 2.10**



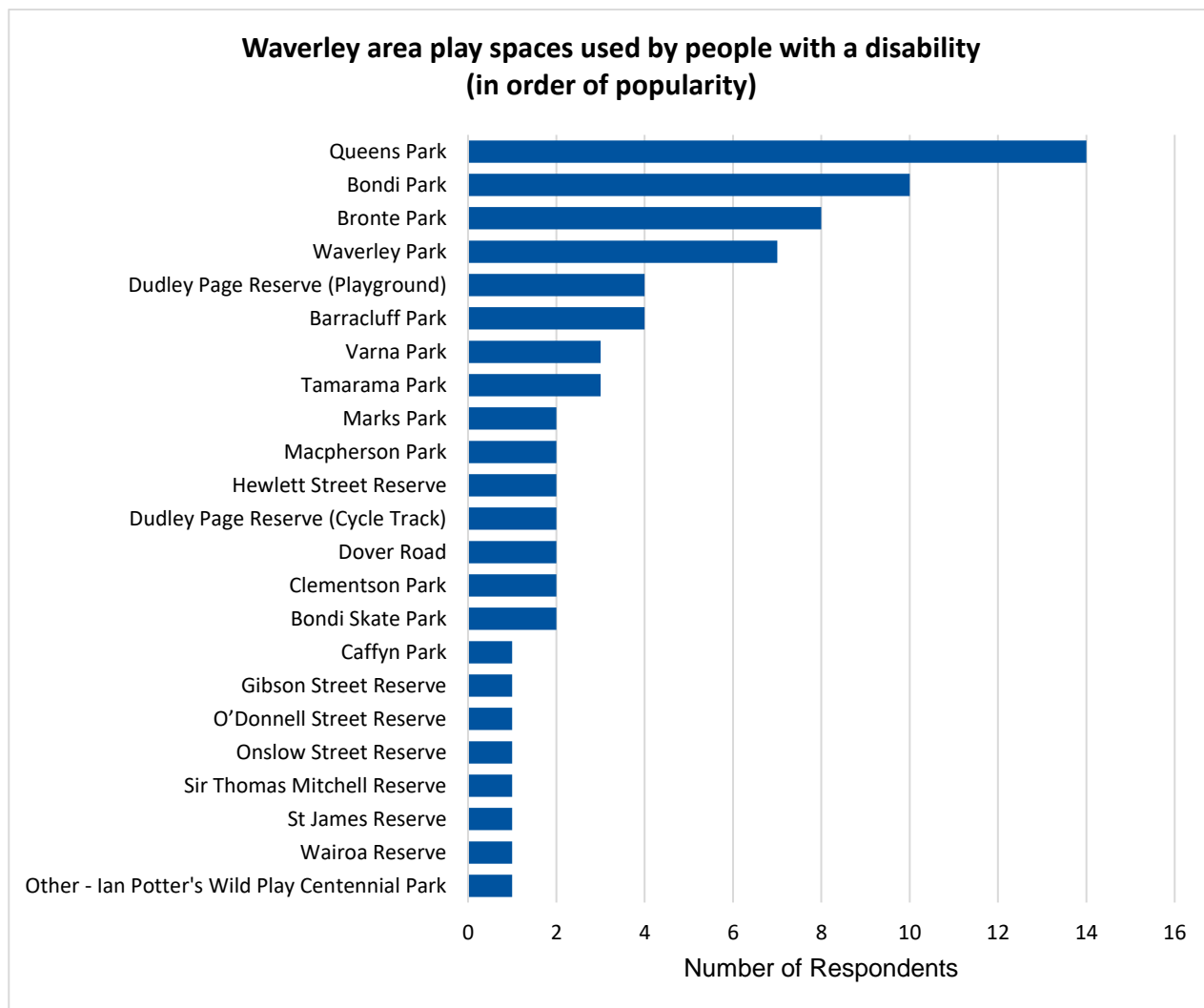
**FIGURE 2.11**

\* Ian Potter's Wild Play Centennial Park

\* Don't know all the play spaces by name (visitor to Waverley)



The results from Questions 10 and 12 were combined to show all 23 play spaces visited in the Waverley area by twenty (20) respondents in the target groups. These are shown in descending order of popularity in the graph below:



**FIGURE 2.12**

These results show that the favourite play spaces to visit with people with a disability are:

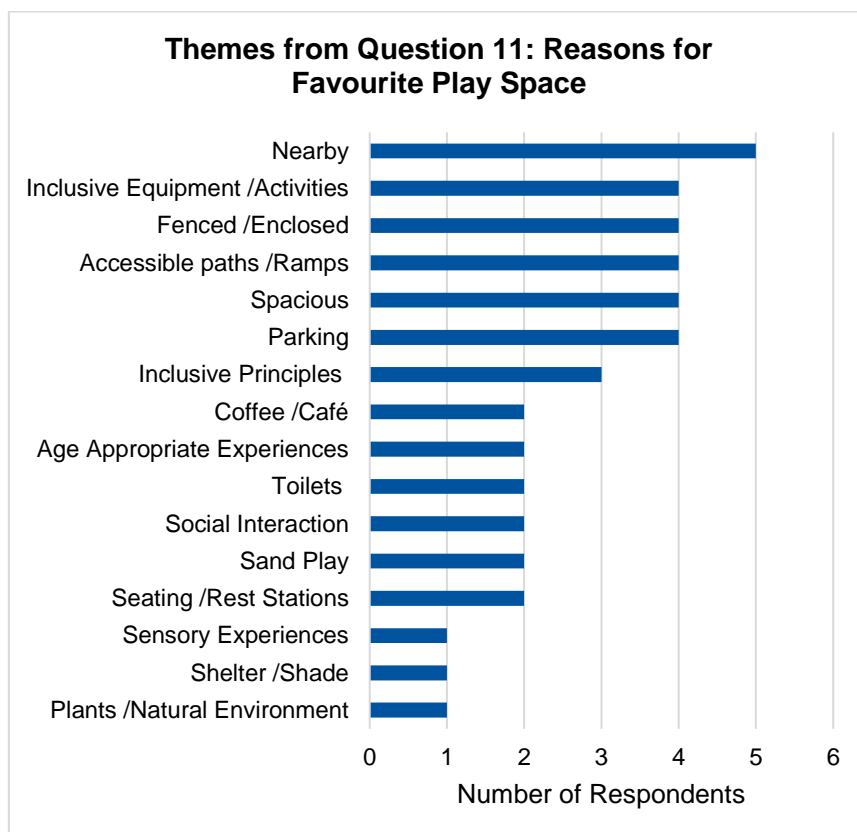
- Queens Park (14 votes);
- Bondi Park (10 votes);
- Bronte Park (8 votes); and
- Waverley Park (7 votes).

It is of note that the top two favourite play spaces in the Waverley LGA for people with a disability (Queens Park and Bondi Park) are play spaces that have been specifically designed with Inclusive Principles in mind.

### Q 11. Please tell us why this is your favourite play space for people with a disability or special needs?

Question 11 asked respondents to describe the reasons for their choice of favourite play space in the Waverley area for people with disabilities or special needs. Eighteen (18) people responded, and their verbatim comments are listed in Appendix B. A themed analysis of their comments is shown in Figure 2.13 below.

Results suggest that people with a disability (and the people that support them) are attracted to play spaces that are conveniently located, easily accessible, with plenty of parking and a variety of inclusive and accessible play experiences for different ages. They also value the opportunity to socialise and have inclusive and accessible amenities to make their visit comfortable and pleasant.



**FIGURE 2.13**

The topics mentioned by four (4) or more respondents (22% or more) are listed below in rank order, with some example comments for each. These represent the top seven topics overall (five topics are tied in second place).

1. **Nearby/Convenience:** “close to school”, “close to where we live”, “nearby”;
2. **Inclusive equipment /Activities:** “great equipment for additional needs”, “variety of play equipment”;
2. **Fenced or Enclosed:** “the park is fully gated”, “enclosed area”, “closed fence”;
2. **Accessible Paths/Ramps:** “easy road to play space access”, “easy for us to access”, “flooring that’s wheel friendly”;
2. **Spacious:** “can easily walk around the park”, “Large areas of space”, “Plenty of space”;
2. **Parking:** “parking and ...”, “easy to park”; and
7. **Inclusive Principles:** “space to have time away from others if needed”, “easy to access quickly... (from school)”.

## 2.8 Preferences for Making Waverley's Play Spaces more Inclusive

Questions 15 to 18 were the core of the survey. They asked for views on “How can Waverley Council’s existing play spaces be improved to be more equitable and inclusive play spaces where everyone can play.” These questions are key to informing the study of the requirements and wishes of the community.

Of the sixty (60) respondents answering these questions, 36 (60%) were from the target group and 24 (40%) were from the non-target group, as described in Section 2.2. The results for the two groups have been examined separately. This allows for a comparison between the needs and wants of people with lived experience of disability and those able-bodied people without a lived experience of disability. Graphs of both groups’ responses to each question are shown side by side for easy comparison.

Respondents were asked to indicate the appeal of a pre-determined list of items and experiences for inclusive play under three question headings:

- Play experiences (Question 15);
- Equipment for young people, adults and older people (Question 16); and
- Supportive Facilities (Question 17).

For the analysis of results, items are categorised as either Essential, Highly Desirable or Desirable according to the percentage of respondents that selected “Appealing, I would be more likely to come”:

- Essential – 80% or more respondents found the item appealing;
- Highly Desirable – 60-80% of respondents found the item appealing; and
- Desirable – 50-60% (more than half) of respondents found the item appealing.

Overall, most people find inclusive play highly appealing across a variety of experiences and supportive amenities.

When comparing the preferences of the two groups, there were more similarities than differences. This suggests that people welcome and value inclusive and accessible play in Waverley’s play spaces. It also suggests that access and inclusion upgrades can be seamlessly integrated into a space without perceived impacts to other users.

The results show that people in general value a variety of engaging play experiences for all ages and abilities as well as amenities that make their visit more appealing and create ease in staying longer in play spaces.

### 2.8.1 Findings on Preferences for Inclusive Play Experiences (Question 15)

Question 15 asked respondents to indicate the appeal of a list of ten (10) inclusive play experiences for children, young people, adults or older people with a disability or special need. The results were analysed separately for target and non-target respondents to the study, as shown in Figure 2.14.

Of note is that nine out of ten experiences were Desirable (appealing to more than 50%) to the whole group of sixty (60) respondents, with nature play, sensory play, physical play and social play seen as Essential experiences (appealing to more than 80%). All ten experiences were Desirable to the 36 target group respondents.

#### 36 Respondents from Target Groups

##### Inclusive Play experiences

- Essential
  - Nature play (86%)
  - Sensory play (86%)
- Highly Desirable
  - Physical – static equipment (78%)
  - Physical – moving equipment (72%)
  - Imaginative play (72%)
  - Free play (67%)
  - Social play (63%)
  - Cognitive play (63%)
- Desirable
  - Solo Play (58%)
  - Quiet Play (58%)

#### 24 Respondents from Non-Target Groups

##### Inclusive Play experiences

- Essential
  - Physical – moving equipment (96%)
  - Social play (88%)
  - Physical –static equipment (83%)
- Highly Desirable
  - Sensory play (79%)
  - Nature play (75%)
  - Imaginative play (75%)
  - Cognitive play (67%)
  - Free play (63%)
- Desirable
  - Quiet Play (54%)
- Less than 50% appeal
  - Solo Play (38%)

When comparing the two respondent groups the main differences that occur are:

- There is a higher appeal of solo play (e.g. watching others, individual play opportunities, side-by-side play) from the target group respondents compared to the non-target group. This suggests a need to provide solo play experiences specifically for people with a disability.
- There is a much higher importance on social play (e.g. see-saw, pulley and sand, “tip”, hang out spaces, group spinner, etc.) for non-target group respondents. Nevertheless, nearly two thirds (63%) of target group who responded value social play.
- There is a higher value placed on nature play in the target group (86%) compared with the non-target group (75%), consistent with research and feedback regarding the soothing value of nature play for people with disabilities.

These results suggest that, for play spaces to be fully inclusive they require a combination of play experiences including:

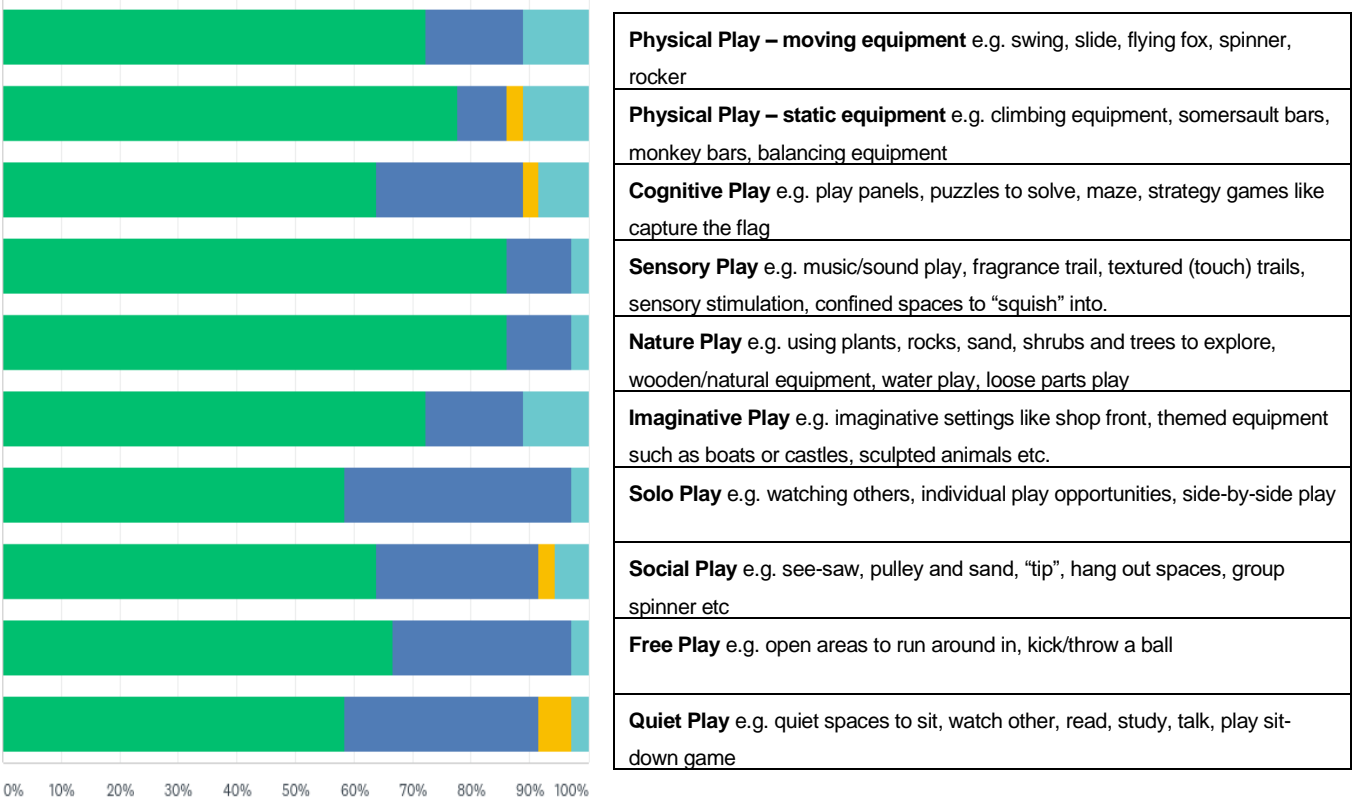
- Inclusive experiences of nature play (e.g. using plants, rocks, sand, shrubs and trees to explore, wooden/natural equipment, water play, loose parts play);
- Inclusive experiences of sensory play (e.g. music/sound play, fragrance trail, textured (touch) trails, sensory stimulation, confined spaces to “squish” into);
- Inclusive experiences of physical play with both static (e.g. climbing equipment, somersault bars, monkey bars, balancing equipment) and moving (e.g. swing, slide, flying fox, spinner, rocker) equipment;
- Inclusive opportunities for imaginative play (e.g. imaginative settings like shop front, themed equipment such as boats or castles, sculpted animals etc);

- Universal access to free play spaces (e.g. open areas to run around in, kick/throw a ball);
- Consideration of spaces to cater for inclusive cognitive play (e.g. play panels, puzzles to solve, maze, strategy games like capture the flag) and quiet play (e.g. quiet spaces to sit, watch other, read, study, talk, play sit-down game);
- Special spaces for solo and quiet play; and
- Inclusive experiences of social play (e.g. group equipment, group games, cooperative equipment).



**Q15. In general, what kind of play experiences would you like to see in play spaces in the Waverley area to cater for children, young people, adults or older people with a disability or special needs?** (Please think of your general play experiences, rather than specific items of equipment. We need to know what additional play experiences are required to make our play spaces more inclusive for you).

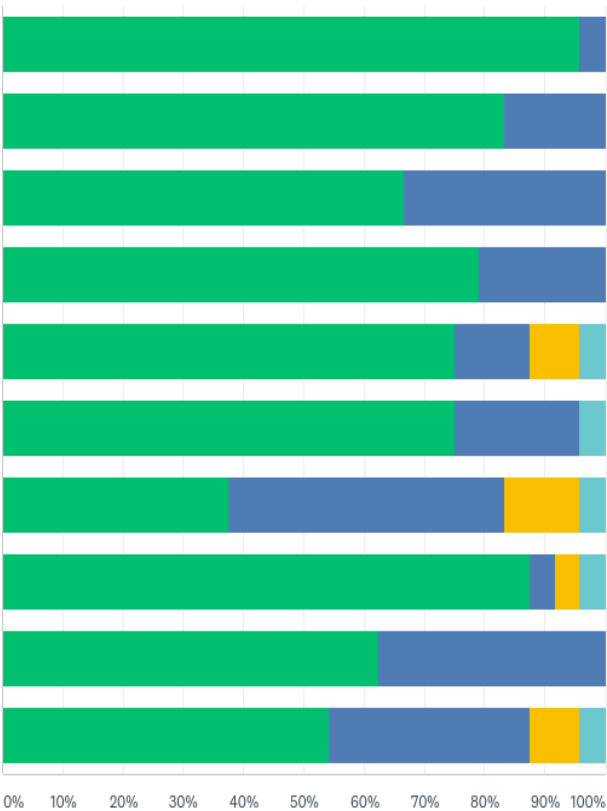
**36 Respondents from Target Groups**



Appealing I would be more likely to come  
Neutral it makes no difference to whether I come  
Undesirable it would discourage me from coming  
Not Applicable to my family / group's disability or special needs

**FIGURE 2.14**

**24 Respondents from Non-Target Groups**



Appealing I would be more likely to come  
Neutral it makes no difference to whether I come  
Undesirable it would discourage me from coming  
Not Applicable to my family / group's disability or special needs

## 2.8.2 Findings on Preferences to Cater for Adults and Older People

Question 16 asked respondents to consider the pleasure and needs of adults and older people in a play space, and indicate the appeal of a list of five (5) intergenerational play experiences that would encourage adults to play with or alongside children, or in their own right with other adults. The results were analysed separately for the two groups of respondents, as shown in Figure 2.16.

Both groups indicated that all five (5) listed experiences were Desirable (appealing to more than 50%), with all but adult exercise equipment being Highly Desirable.

### 36 Respondents from Target Groups

Catering for adults and older people

- Essential
  - Intergenerational equipment (89%)
  - Equipment for agility, balance and co-ordination (81%)
- Highly Desirable
  - Group play items (73%)
  - Signs to cue adult play (70%)
- Desirable
  - Adult exercise equipment co-located with children's play areas (50%)

### 24 Respondents from Non-Target Groups

Catering for adults and older people

- Essential
  - Equipment for agility, balance and co-ordination (81%)
- Highly Desirable
  - Intergenerational equipment (77%)
  - Signs to cue adult play (77%)
  - Group play items (73%)
- Desirable
  - Adult exercise equipment co-located with children's play areas (55%)

Of note is the similarity between the two groups. For example, intergenerational play experiences (specialised play equipment in two sizes for adults and children e.g. "You-and-Me" swing – **Error! Reference source not found.**) is of almost universal appeal (89%) to target groups, while more than three quarters (77%) of non-target respondents find it appealing.

These results suggest that:

- Whilst intergenerational play is still a new idea, everyone would highly value the opportunity to play across the generations with intergenerational equipment and group play items, where adults and children can be accommodated together (e.g. group spinner, group swing).
- There is an appetite from everyone to see specialised equipment for older people to encourage physical activity specifically maintaining agility, balance and co-ordination (as opposed to muscle, strength and cardiac exercise) – **Error! Reference source not found.**
- Adults and older people would value being encouraged to use play equipment through signage to state that the play space is for adults and children to give adults and older people the cue to use the equipment as well.
- Whilst adult exercise equipment in parks is not a new idea, everyone would value having it co-located with children's play areas.

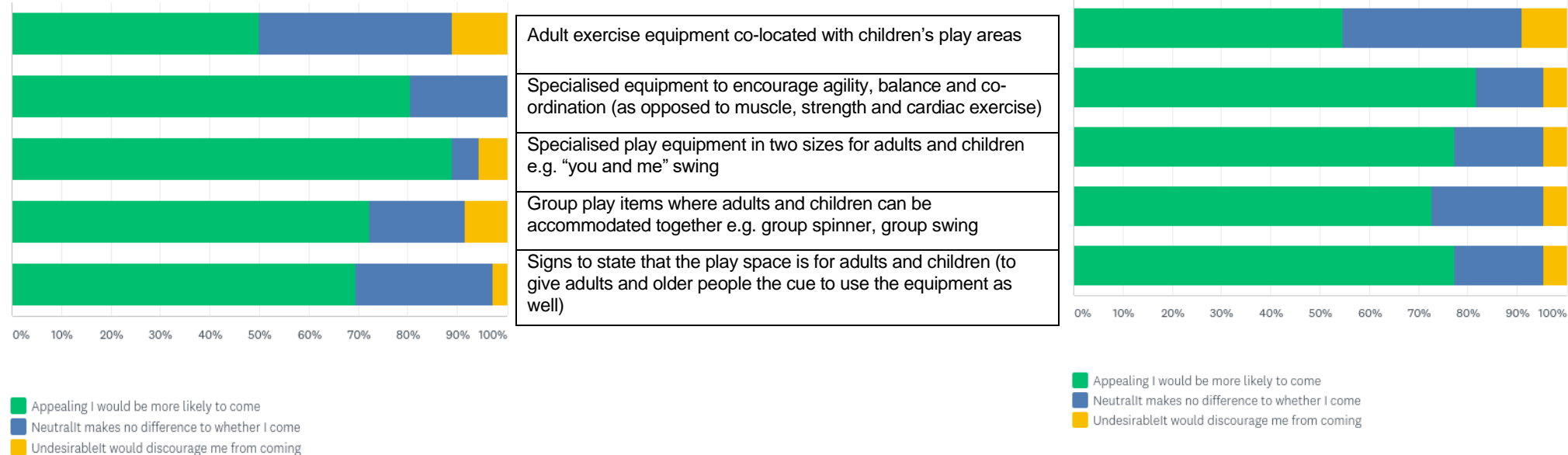


FIGURE 2.15: EXAMPLES OF INTERGENERATIONAL EQUIPMENT

**Q16. When considering the pleasure and needs of youth, adults and older people in a play space, which of the following appeal to you?**

**36 Respondents from Target Groups**

**22 Respondents from Non-Target Groups**



**FIGURE 2.16**

Other, please specify:

**TABLE 2.3**

Criterion for Inclusive Play	Thoughts about what should be considered to make play spaces in the Waverley area more inclusive
Parent, carer, service provider for a person with a disability or special needs	Play equipment to encourage parent and child to play together is a great idea, but I wouldn't want adult equipment in the playground. Children could get hurt trying to use it. It could attract adults who prey on children.
Parent, carer, service provider for a person with a disability or special needs	There is no access to specific exercise areas for people over 65, indeed even 85 years, this would be invaluable for falls prevention and well-being including social
Experience in accompanying people with a disability/special needs on excursions to play spaces	please provide equipment where adults can have fun, along with equipment for agility etc e.g. swings for an adult (not necessarily the you and me swing)
Experience or interest in inclusive play	integrated equipment so people of all abilities can use it and play together (not in a segregated separate area)
Experience or interest in inclusive play	multifunctional space based on simplicity yet appealing and challenging
Do not meet any criteria	Working and useable equipment Waverley Oval Park has a rocket ship kids can't use a slide kids can't use and not enough play equipment for young and older children. With the number of children visiting because older siblings train in the field below its need better equipment and maybe add another play space closer to the sporting ground so parents can watch their child training and playing in the play space

### 2.8.3 Findings on Preferences for Supportive Elements to Cater for People with Disabilities in Play Spaces (Question 17)

Question 17 asked respondents to consider the types of supportive elements they would like to see in play spaces in the Waverley area to cater for children, adults and older people with a disability or special needs. They were requested to provide their views on 24 specific elements to meet their needs (e.g. double gates, wheelchair height bubblers/water refill stations – shown in Figures Figure 2.17 and Figure 2.18). They were also asked to indicate any elements that were not relevant to the disability or special needs that they are dealing with.

The results were analysed separately for respondents who did and did not come from target groups for the Study, as shown in the graphs in Figure 2.19. It was not surprising to find that non-target group respondents tended to have lower ratings of appeal for many of the items.

It is noteworthy that the results for both groups showed very similar patterns of appeal. For example, of the seven essential items (appealing to more than 80%) six items were common for both groups (see below). Also, both groups had the same four least appealing items (minibus bay, Auslan and Braille Signage, Left/Right hand accessible toilets).

#### 36 Respondents from Target Groups

Supportive elements to cater for disability

- Essential
  - Shade – trees or structure (97%)
  - Accessible toilets (97%)
  - Fencing to entire play space (94%)
  - Parking – accessible nearby (91%)
  - Toilets – near play space (91%)
  - Accessible Paths (88%)
  - Picnic tables connected to paths (88%)
- Highly Desirable
  - Wheelchair/ stroller/ mobility device parking within play space (79%)
  - Gentle slopes (76%)
  - Handrails and kerbs on steep paths (76%)
  - Bubbler at wheelchair height (76%)
  - Water bottle refill stations at wheelchair height (74%)
  - Seating with back and armrests (74%)
  - Picnic tables – to accommodate wheelchairs (71%)
  - Kerbside ramps at street or carpark (68%)
  - Tactile indicators on paths/ramps/stairs (65%)
- Desirable
  - Group seating (59%)
  - Double gates at entries (air lock) (53%)
- Less than 50% appeal
  - Central gathering space (47%)

#### 24 Respondents from Non-Target Groups

Supportive elements to cater for disability

- Essential
  - Shade – trees or structure (95%)
  - Parking – accessible nearby (90%)
  - Toilets – nearby to play space (90%)
  - Picnic tables connected to paths (85%)
  - Accessible toilets (85%)
  - Fencing to entire play space (80%)
  - Group seating (80%)
- Highly Desirable
  - Water bottle refill stations at wheelchair height (75%)
  - Accessible Paths (65%)
  - Bubbler at wheelchair height (60%)
  - Wheelchair/ stroller/ mobility device parking within play space (60%)
- Desirable
  - Double gates at entries (air lock) (55%)
  - Central gathering space (55%)
  - Accessible toilets with adult sized change table and hoist (55%)
  - Picnic tables – to accommodate wheelchairs (50%)
  - Kerbside ramps at street or carpark (50%)
- Less than 50% appeal
  - Gentle slopes (45%)
  - Handrails and kerbs on steep paths (35%)
  - Seating with back and armrests (35%)

- Accessible toilets with adult sized change table and hoist (44%)
- Auslan signage (38%)
- Braille signage (38%)
- Left-hand and right-hand accessible toilet cubicles (38%)
- Minibus bay – accessible nearby (29%)
- Tactile indicators on paths/ ramps/ stairs (30%)
- Auslan signage (20%)
- Left-hand and right-hand accessible toilet cubicles (20%)
- Braille signage (15%)
- Minibus bay – accessible nearby (15%)



**FIGURE 2.17: DOUBLE GATE (AIRLOCK) ENTRANCE**



**FIGURE 2.18: WHEELCHAIR HEIGHT BUBBLER AND WATER BOTTLE REFILL STATION**

The main differences between the two groups are shown below. These differences suggest that visitors to play spaces who are dealing with disability or impairment have a higher emphasis on accessibility, whilst those not dealing with disability or impairment may have a higher emphasis on the pragmatics:

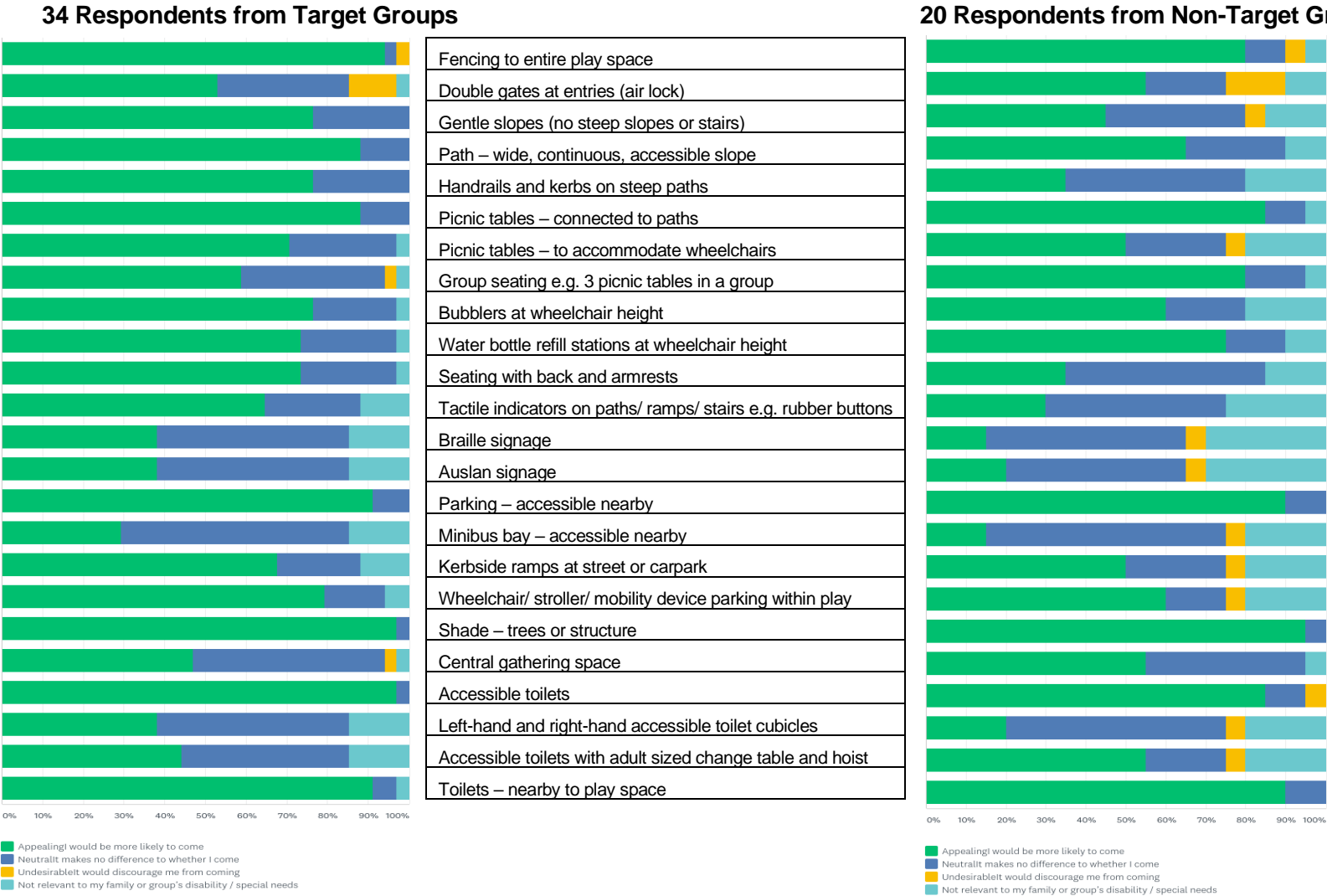
- Top 4 items of significantly higher appeal to people from target groups in descending order of difference:
  - Handrails and kerbs on steep paths;
  - Seating with back and armrests;
  - Tactile indicators on paths/ ramps/ stairs e.g. rubber buttons in the path indicate to steps; and
  - Gentle slopes (no steep slopes or stairs).
- Items of somewhat higher appeal to people from non-target group in descending order of difference:
  - Group seating e.g. 3 picnic tables in a group;
  - Accessible toilets with adult sized change table and hoist; and
  - Central gathering space.
- Items of similar appeal to both groups (less than 5% difference) in descending order of appeal – suggesting universal amenities for everyone to make play spaces more comfortable, easy to get to, places to socialise and easy to stay in:
  - Shade – trees or structure;
  - Parking – accessible nearby;
  - Toilets – nearby to play space;
  - Picnic tables – connected to paths;
  - Water bottle refill stations at wheelchair height; and
  - Double gates at entries (air lock).

These results suggest that for play spaces to be fully inclusive, they require careful consideration of the needs of people with disabilities (as indicated by 18 of the 24 items being Desirable to target group respondents, 7 of which were considered Essential, and 9 being Highly Desirable).



Furthermore, the choices made by people who do not live and work with disability indicate that they care about having accessible and inclusive amenities to support people with a disability. These results indicate that if play spaces are designed to be inclusive and accessible, they will automatically also support everyone regardless of age and ability.

Q17: Which types of supportive elements would you like to see in play spaces in the Waverley area to cater for children, adults and older people with a disability or special needs?



**Q17. Which types of supportive elements would you like to see in play spaces in the Waverley area to cater for children, adults and older people with a disability or special needs? (continued)**

Other, please specify (with key demographic information):

**TABLE 2.4**

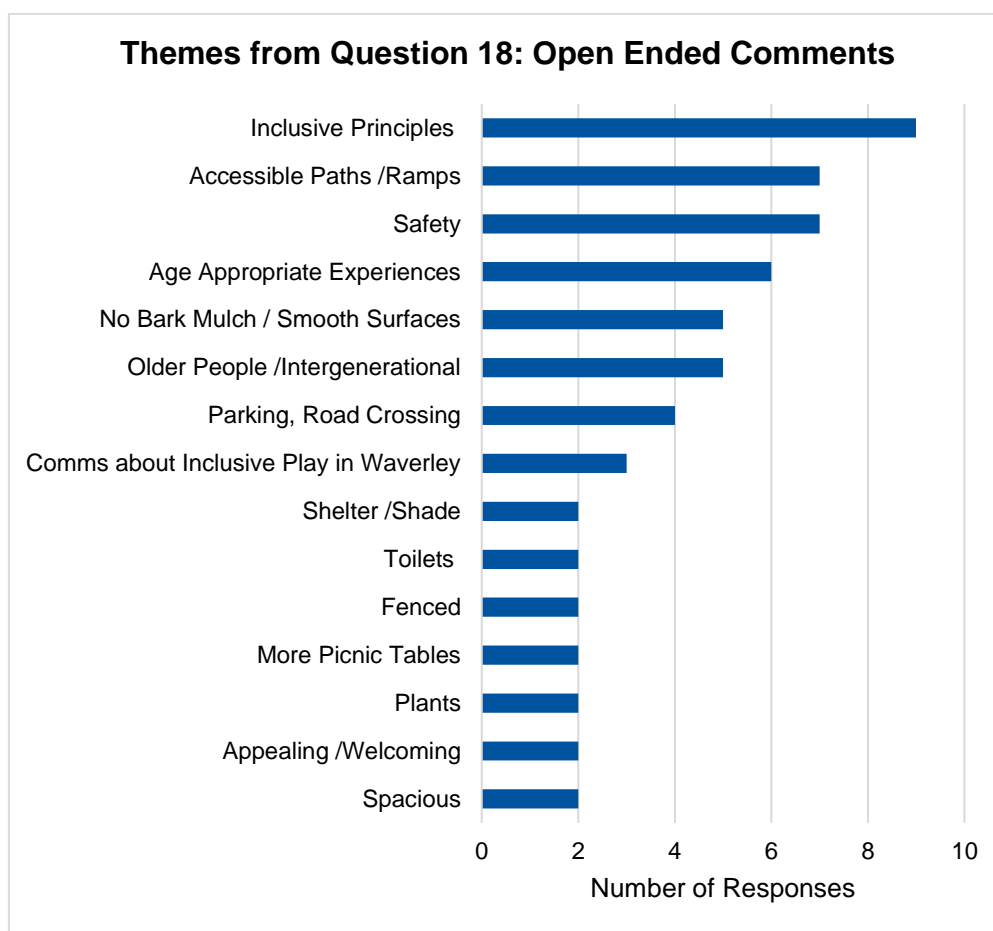
Criterion for Inclusive Play	Thoughts about what should be considered to make play spaces in the Waverley area more inclusive
Parent, carer, service provider for a person with a disability or special needs	Needs for older people with limited mobility, vision, hearing
Parent, carer, service provider for a person with a disability or special needs	Shade and bathrooms are my biggest concerns Varna park needs a toilet it has plenty of shade
Staff, volunteer or associate of a service organisation	play equipment that wheelchairs can go on to
Staff, volunteer or associate of a service organisation	Coffee shop
Staff, volunteer or associate of a service organisation	Toilets definitely
Staff, volunteer or associate of a service organisation	Some of these items would fall under AS1428 - e.g. TGSIs
Experience or interest in inclusive play	Cameras for safety (sadly)
Experience or interest in inclusive play	If gates are used - they need to be able to be manipulated easily by parents/carers with disabilities
Experience or interest in inclusive play	Safety

## 2.8.4 Thoughts about Making Play Spaces More Accessible and Inclusive in Waverley (Question 18)

The final question of the survey was a free text question asking for thoughts and comments about what should be considered to make play spaces in the Waverley area more accessible and inclusive. Whilst 26 people left comments, six of these were excluded from the analysis as they did not make comments about inclusive or accessible play. A themed analysis of the comments is shown in the graph below. The verbatim comments from all 26 respondents can be found in Appendix B.

**Q18: Tell us your thoughts about what should be considered about making play spaces in the Waverley area more accessible and inclusive.**

(20 Responses)



**FIGURE 2.20**

\*Note: Six responses from non-target respondents were not included in the analysis as comments were not about inclusive or accessible play

The key topics mentioned by 5 or more respondents (25% or more) are listed below in rank order. Note that some topics are equally ranked and hence have the same ranking number.

1. **The Provision of Play Spaces Designed with Principles of Inclusion** – people value and would like more play spaces that encourage inclusive play and are designed by play space experts who have a track record in purpose-built designs with universal design principles;
2. **More Accessible Paths and Ramps** – to assist with way finding as well as provide even, wide and accessible surfaces for wheelchair users, strollers and people with mobility issues;

3. **Safety** – security of fences and gates, road safety and zebra crossings, and keeping children safe in play spaces used by adults;
4. **Age Appropriate Experiences** – for children, older people, teenagers and very young children;
5. **No Mulch/ Smooth Accessible Surfaces** – to create ease for children with sensory difficulties as well as accommodating wheelchairs, strollers and mobility devices; and
5. **Older People and Intergenerational Play** – to enable older people to exercise and interact socially as well as provide intergenerational play opportunities.

## 2.9 Key Messages from the Survey

The Survey provides valuable insights into the wishes of the Waverley community as well as those of key stakeholders in the aged care and disability sectors that support people within and outside the Waverley area. It also highlights the importance of inclusive play to people who do not deal with disability or special needs in their lives, suggesting that there is a general groundswell of opinion in the community that values inclusion in public places and play spaces.

Some open-ended comments in the survey highlighted that respondents do not recognise current inclusive play spaces – indeed there were some comments that Waverley has no inclusive play spaces. This in turn means that Waverley Council could communicate more about:

- What an inclusive play space is (and is not); and
- Where the existing inclusive and accessible play spaces in the Waverley area can be found.

### 2.9.1 Key messages from the Core Questions:

#### Inclusive Play Experiences

For play spaces to be fully inclusive, they require:

- Inclusive experiences of nature play (e.g. using plants, rocks, sand, shrubs and trees to explore, wooden/natural equipment, water play, loose parts play);
- Inclusive experiences of sensory play (e.g. music/sound play, fragrance trail, textured (touch) trails, sensory stimulation, confined spaces to “squish”);
- Inclusive experiences of physical play with both static (e.g. climbing equipment, somersault bars, monkey bars, balancing equipment) and moving (e.g. swing, slide, flying fox, spinner, rocker) equipment;
- Opportunities for imaginative play (e.g. imaginative settings like shop front, themed equipment such as boats or castles, sculpted animals etc);
- Universal access to free play spaces (e.g. open areas to run around in, kick/throw a ball);
- Consideration of spaces to cater for inclusive and accessible cognitive play (e.g. play panels, puzzles to solve, maze, strategy games like capture the flag);
- Inclusive experiences of social play (e.g. group equipment, group games, cooperative equipment); and
- Special spaces for solo and quiet play (e.g. quiet spaces to sit, watch others read, study, talk, play sit-down game)

#### Catering for Adults and Older People

Results indicate that there is enthusiasm about providing equipment and experiences to engage adults and older people in play spaces. Specifically:

- Whilst intergenerational play is still a new idea, everyone would highly value the opportunity to play across the generations with intergenerational equipment, as well as group play items where adults and children can be accommodated together (e.g. group spinner, group swing);
- There is strong appetite from everyone to see specialised equipment for older people to maintain encourage agility, balance and co-ordination (as opposed to muscle, strength and cardiac exercise);



- Adults and older people would value being encouraged to use play equipment through signage to state that the play space is for adults and children. This gives adults and older people the cue to use the equipment as well; and
- Whilst adult exercise equipment in parks is not a new idea, everyone would value having it co-located with children's play areas.

### **Supportive Elements to Cater for People with a Disability or Special Needs**

Results suggest that:

- For play spaces to be fully inclusive, they require careful consideration of the needs of people with disabilities;
- People who do not live or work with disability care about having accessible and inclusive amenities to support people with a disability;
- A clear indication that if play spaces are designed to be inclusive and accessible, they will automatically also support everyone regardless of age and ability; and
- Universally appealing supportive facilities include shade, fencing, nearby parking, nearby accessible toilets, picnic tables connected to paths, accessible paths, and water-bottle refill stations. All these items should be designed to be fully accessible.



# 3 Summary of Face-to-Face Community Consultations





Five separate consultations were held with different interest groups in the community, and one submission was received from the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. The detailed reports from each consultation are attached in the Appendices. This Section summarises the key messages/recommendations in four (4) different categories:

- Infants, Toddlers and Preschool children;
- Children with a disability;
- Young people with a disability; and
- Older people and intergenerational play.



**FIGURE 3.1: PHOTOS FROM SCHOOL CONSULTATIONS**

## 3.1 Infants, Toddlers and Preschool Children

### 3.1.1 Family Day Care Consultation

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects and Waverley Council consulted with four staff representatives from Waverley Family Day Care Services and three Family Day Care educators, who between them had eleven (11) children aged 1-5 years in their care. The three educators were on a regular group outing to Clementson Park play space.

The children were observed, and educators interviewed about how they get to play spaces with young children, what engages very young children in play spaces, and what supportive elements make their visit more sustained. Whilst there were no children with known disabilities in the group, some educators had experience of caring for very young children with suspected additional needs or sensory processing disorders that are as yet undiagnosed. Very young children as a cohort are similar to people with disabilities in that they are physically “wobbly”, they are learning about social interaction, and are not yet able to fully regulate sensory or emotional responses to their environment.

Detailed notes on this consultation can be found in Appendix C.

The main finding from the consultation is that play spaces often do not have adequate equipment and play experiences scaled for small children. This places an extra duty of care on educators to ensure safety of the children, as well as to find novel ways to engage them with equipment more suited to older children. Specific requests include:

#### Inclusive Play Experiences

- Separate area for very young children so that they are not “run over” by older children, and carers can more easily keep them in one place rather than running between scattered items across a play space;
- Equipment and experiences scaled for small children with:
  - Easy access points to enter/climb on and exit/climb off;
  - Extra postural supports and handholds to help them feel secure;
  - Low to the ground or ground level equipment;
  - Enclosed spaces to crawl into; and
  - Safety features e.g. safety nets for larger equipment used by older children.
- At least 2 “baby swings” which are smaller, have extra postural support and are safer;
- Quiet corner or space for children with emotional or sensory issues to withdraw safely from the “hubhub” of a busy play space;
- Sensory play activities for small children, for example:
  - Sand play in a separate sand pit in a quiet corner for digging, feeling sand through fingers and toes (rather than bark chips in the soft fall);
  - Activity boards at toddler height with items that they can spin, push, rock etc; and
  - Music play scaled for smaller children, and at their height.
- Nature play is highly valued, for example:
  - Opportunity to engage with adjacent visits from dogs, birds or insects;
  - Garden areas with plants and bushes to enjoy;
  - Rocks to climb and sit on; and
  - Access to a local community garden would be highly valued for this cohort.
- Specific equipment and experiences for babies, for example:
  - Bucket seat swing;
  - Block stairs to crawl/climb;
  - Low lying play gym;
  - Mounds to crawl up/down;
  - Pull-up equipment e.g. low horizontal net;

- Low slide; and
- Cubby.
- Intergenerational and social play experiences:
  - Equipment like the “You-and-Me” swing for carers or grandparents to play with the child;
  - Group equipment such as large rockers or spinners so that a carer can supervise several small children at the same time; and
  - Group equipment for several small children to use at once (e.g. hammock close to the ground).

## **Supportive Elements and Amenities**

- Parking and road safety:
  - Safe road crossings to get to the play space (many carers have to cross busy roads around the park); and
  - Accessible parking spaces to allow unloading and loading of strollers and safe access for small children.
- Accessible pathways:
  - Paved/concrete pathways to the entrances to make easy navigation with strollers or mobility devices; and
  - Pathways around the park perimeter to allow scootering, and to connect the benches/seating to easy access.
- Safety:
  - Level pathways and access to equipment to avoid trip hazards for small children and ease navigation with strollers and mobility devices;
  - Consideration of placement of rocks outside fall zones of equipment; and
  - Consideration of arrangement of play experiences for small children to be grouped together for easier supervision, especially with large challenging equipment for older children nearby.
- Toilets and nappy changing facilities:
  - Toilets would enable young children to stay longer, and would be especially valued for those who are toilet training; and
  - Nappy change areas with flat areas to lay a baby, nappy bags etc. (many parents resort to using seats and benches which may not be safe or hygienic).
- Hand-washing facilities for carers changing nappies, as well as for children before they eat;
- Stroller and mobility device parking within the fenced play area to avoid congestion caused by many strollers at peak use times;
- Fencing is essential to ensure children are safe, and to ease supervision:
  - Fencing to look more inviting – rather than a barrier;
  - Fencing to include trees in the play space, rather than fence them out; and
  - Consider fencing to connect with other fences in the park in order to create more space and avoid dead zones between fences.
- Seating and picnic facilities – for eating and social interaction:
  - More seating with back and arm support;
  - More flat “platform” seating for young children to picnic on or gather on in groups (also useful for nappy changing);
  - Rocks for incidental seating;
  - Seating outside the play space linked by pathways; and
  - Picnic tables.
- Spacious grassy areas:
  - Enables young children to eat in groups on picnic rugs;
  - For free play or simple ball games;
  - Allows interaction with birds and dogs; and
  - For sensory play to feel grass texture.
- Under-surfacing:
  - Consider rubber surfaces to allow for level access;



- Mulch with very small bark chips has pros and cons for very small children:
  - Children love using mulch for loose parts play;
  - Small children may ingest bark chips, choke or get them into their eyes; and
  - Annoying for carers to keep emptying shoes of small bark chips.
- If mulch is used, levels must be maintained, as a slightly lower level may not impact older children, but it makes a difference for very small children in accessing equipment or navigating transitions to rubber or concrete surfaces.

## 3.2 Children with a Disability

### 3.2.1 Lifestart Consultation

Lifestart is a not for profit organisation which used to 'do what parents wanted to achieve' with individual hands-on therapy e.g. taking children with a disability to play in a park. This focus has changed to assisting families getting National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding, and meeting the NDIS criteria. Lifestart focuses on 0-7-year-olds, although they support people living with disabilities up to the age of 24.

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects and Waverley Council held a consultation with a staff representative from Lifestart to hear from staff about their ideas and suggestions on how to make play spaces more inclusive and ensure everyone can play in the Waverley LGA. The detailed notes of the consultation are in Appendix D.

The staff at Lifestart believe that inclusive play is not only focussed on children but includes grandparents and the elderly. Inclusion in play spaces encompasses all people – whichever walk of life – all ages, all capabilities, and cultures. Their suggestions for inclusive play spaces in the Waverley area are:

#### Inclusive Play Experiences

- Sensory play, water play, sand play:
  - Crucial for children with additional needs; and
  - Separate location of sensory experiences as some children like one or the other and not necessarily both.
- Accessible play equipment, especially equipment that allows for use of walkers or wheelchairs;
  - Wheelchair accessible merry-go-rounds (spinners);
  - Flush mounted equipment is preferred to side transfer; and
  - All abilities flying fox placed side by side with a standard flying fox – offering choice – is preferred to 5-way harness seats that are not appropriate for toddlers.
- Minimal exits from climbing equipment above ground level:
  - Too many exit options from above-ground decks makes supervision difficult from ground level.
- Separate play spaces for toddlers:
  - 2-year-olds do not always want to play with 7-year-olds.
- Location and provision of inclusive play:
  - To be provided across a variety of small and large inclusive play spaces across the LGA.
- Website and Apps:
  - Information about Council play provision and supportive elements was deemed vital to know for planning a trip to a play space; and
  - Websites to provide information of facilities, play items, inclusive level and pictures.

#### Supportive Elements

- Gated and fenced play spaces:
  - Crucial to prevent children with additional needs from absconding;

- Self-closing gates are essential as carers often do not have a spare hand to close gate; and
- Double gates (airlocks) can hinder people in wheelchairs or with large strollers and mobility devices.
- **Parking and paths:**
  - Road safety and accessible parking are considered crucial to a successful playground outing;
  - Links need to be made between roads, carparks and play spaces by using kerb ramps and accessible paths; and
  - Play spaces to have wide circumference paths linking all equipment and play experiences with no trip hazards.
- **Rubber under-surfacing is highly desirable to allow for wheelchairs and mobility devices:**
  - Should be used generously to allow for strollers and mobility device circulation; and
  - Avoid mulch/bark chips, especially for children who like oral stimulation.
- **Shade:**
  - Strongly recommended, with appropriate use of natural shade or shade structures when natural shade is not available.
- **Toilets:**
  - Close to play space – no more than 50m away;
  - Good accessible pathway; and
  - Parent's room where fathers are welcome too.

### 3.2.2 Consultation with Local Inclusive Play Advocate

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects held a phone consultation with a Waverley resident who is an advocate for inclusive play within Waverley LGA and has been lobbying Council for access and inclusion upgrades at Council play spaces.

The resident is a parent (without a disability) of a child who does not have a disability. The resident has been talking to Waverley Council for 5-6 years about play spaces, attends local Precinct meetings regularly, and visits many of Waverley's play spaces as a parent with a child. The resident's interest in the Inclusive Play Space Study stems from the concern over the lack of inclusive and accessible playgrounds in the LGA. The detailed notes of this consultation are attached in Appendix E.

The resident's views provide a valuable perspective from members of the community who do not deal with disability in their lives or work. She would like to see overt signs of catering for disability in public play spaces such as Liberty Swings and wheelchair accessible equipment.

Points raised from the perspective of the resident are:

#### **Inclusive Play Experiences**

- Waverley LGA needs more accessible and inclusive play spaces like the Chifley Reserve, Collaroy Beach or Livvi's Place;
- Inclusive play spaces should be accessible to older people with mobility devices (e.g. parents of able-bodied children), and the play space must be safe for them;
- Examples of poor inclusive play in the Waverley area:
  - Wairoa Avenue Playground: this play space is in the same street as a special school but has no inclusive equipment in it – it is 'the least accessible play space';
  - Ian Potter Children's Garden, Centennial Park: offers the perfect opportunity for Inclusive Play but falls short of the mark, for example, the slide could be accessible, but isn't; and
  - Stephen Street Playground: this new play space has a lot of rubber, and could have been designed to be inclusive, but was not e.g. the cubby house is not accessible and could be.

- Wishlist for inclusive play spaces:
  - Swing with a high back and 5-point harness, next to a strap or toddler swing;
  - Flying fox with a similar seat and harness;
  - Ramps up to slides on hills;
  - Accessible cubbies; and
  - Equipment that accommodates mobility devices e.g. roundabout (carousel).

### **Inclusive Play Strategy and Design Principles**

- All play spaces should have greater involvement from the Access Committee;
- Play specialists should design and build play spaces;
- A Council accessibility officer should review all Waverley's play space designs before they are built;
- Whilst not every play space can be fully inclusive, due to steep slopes, or busy roads, a "something for everyone" philosophy is sensible and achievable; and
- More information and communication from Council about inclusion and inclusive play spaces in Waverley e.g. the survey for this study was not advertised where the public could be aware of it, for example posters in play spaces, Precinct newsletter, parent Facebook pages.

A key message from the resident is the perception that "there are no truly accessible play spaces in the Waverley LGA". This suggests that Waverley Council needs to communicate with its residents about:

- What inclusive play is (and is not);
- Where inclusive play experiences can be found in the Waverley LGA; and
- The value of Universal Design.

### **3.2.3 Wairoa Special School Consultation**

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects held a phone consultation with the relieving Assistant Principal of the Wairoa School. The educational program supports 50 students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. Some students also have physical and sensory disabilities, and 12 students use wheelchairs or strollers. The detailed notes of this consultation are attached in Appendix F.

The consultation conversation was about the provision of inclusive play spaces in the Waverley LGA as they relate to school outings and visits to parks and play spaces (which are part of the curriculum).

The main findings from the consultation are that the school prefers to visit play spaces within walking distance (Wairoa Reserve and Bondi Park), with occasional bus trips to the Wild Play Garden at Centennial Park.

Specific requests include:

#### **Inclusive Play Experiences**

- For students in wheelchairs:
  - Things that make sounds e.g. doorbells, buttons to press (with wheelchair wheels);
  - Things that are dazzling to look at;
  - Textures to touch;
  - Water in various forms – sprinklers, fountains and trickling down a wall where it can be touched (no pools); and
  - Wheelchair accessible trampolines.
- For students with sensory processing disorders:

- Water is multi-sensory and highly valued;
- Sand play very highly valued;
- Mulch as a tactile experience; and
- Vestibular equipment always popular.
- For able bodied students:
  - Climbing e.g. nets;
  - Flying foxes;
  - Trampolines; and
  - Swings: hammock or bird's nest swings (strap seats are too hard to use).
- Social play:
  - Group play such as group swings, spinners, etc.
- Nature Play:
  - Being amongst trees, logs and boulders; and
  - Water play.

### **Supportive Elements and Amenities**

- Fencing is the most important feature of a suitable play space to ensure safety of students who abscond or wander off:
  - Fencing at Wairoa Reserve would be highly valued and would assist in reducing the staff required for supervision.
- Accessible and even pathways for mobility devices to enable children to:
  - Walk from school to play spaces; and
  - Access and navigate play spaces.
- Toilets:
  - Extend a stay – better toilets required at Bondi Pavilion;
  - Toilets close to play space; and
  - Changing facilities for students in nappies.
- Shade is essential as many students are not capable of temperature regulation;
- Seats:
  - Social/group seating for morning tea;
  - Wheelchair accommodation essential; and
  - Correct height for wheelchairs.
- Water refill stations or taps.

### **3.2.4 Wairoa Special School Excursion to Bondi Park Play Space**

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects and Waverley Council accompanied 5 teachers from the Wairoa School on an excursion to Bondi Park with 11 children with disabilities aged 5-10 years. The children were observed, and teachers interviewed, about how they get to and from play spaces with the children, what engages children with disabilities in play spaces, and what supportive elements make their visit more comfortable. Detailed consultation notes can be found in Appendix F.

The main finding from the consultation is that the school prefers to have excursions to play spaces where children can walk and be in mobility devices, rather than have to be bussed.

Specific requests include:

### **Inclusive Play Experiences**

- Swings:
  - Larger bucket swings to provide support to children bigger than toddlers;
  - Hammock swings for groups of more able-bodied students; and
  - Inclusive swing e.g. Sutcliffe 'boat' swing for less able-bodied children.

- Sensory play:
  - Water play;
  - Sand play is very popular;
  - Blue is a soothing and attractive colour for autistic children;
  - Wall mounted sensory panels e.g. sound, touch, texture, colour, interactive ball game;
  - Warped mirror;
  - Different surfaces e.g. rocks, sand, plants, concrete pathways, rubber soft fall etc.; and
  - Smell e.g. herb gardens.
- For able bodied students:
  - Climbing e.g. nets, ladders;
  - Sliding; and
  - Staircases instead of steep ladders, especially in toddler areas.
- For Secondary school students:
  - Larger equipment;
  - Higher equipment;
  - Spinning – single carousel e.g. Spica;
  - Built in slides that look safe and supportive;
  - Flying foxes; and
  - Water play.
- Social Play:
  - Group play such as group swings, multi-rocker.
- Nature Play:
  - Being amongst trees, bamboo, logs and stones;
  - Water play;
  - Sand play;
  - Stick and clay making programs; and
  - Foliage is very popular – ensure that plants are non-toxic to eat.

## **Supportive Elements and Amenities**

- Fencing is essential for outings with children with a disability;
- Airlock gate for transitioning in and out of play spaces:
  - Seating; and
  - Create a quiet and natural area for withdrawing from busy play space.
- Ramps at street crossings:
  - Easy access for unsteady children; and
  - Cue for behaviour at road crossings.
- Even concrete pathways along the streets:
  - Allow walking from school to play spaces;
  - Easier to walk on than grass – especially with mobility devices;
  - Cue behaviour “we walk here”; and
  - Safer road crossings.
- Accessible pathways with hard surfaces:
  - Smooth entry to play spaces for mobility devices and no trip hazards;
  - Ease of navigating plays-paces with mobility devices; and
  - Crucial for older and heavier students in mobility devices.
- Edges with luminance contrast to cater for children with vision impairment transitioning between materials;
- Accessible Parking is essential;
- Toilets:
  - Toilets close to play space; and
  - Non-gendered or family toilets essential for teachers to help students.
- Seats:

- Social seating (nonlinear) with spaces between for wheelchairs;
  - Wheelchair accommodation essential; and
  - Correct height for wheelchairs.
- Non-toxic foliage for children who eat greenery;
- For Secondary school students:
  - Larger spaces between equipment;
  - Larger social gathering spaces;
  - Hard surface accessible pathways; and
  - Good surveillance.
- For Wairoa Park – a potential key play space as it is adjacent to the school:
  - Fencing would be highly valued and would assist in reducing the staff required for supervision;
  - At least one accessible play experience;
  - Top up mulch levels; and
  - Replace stairs with a ramp.

## 3.3 Young People with a Disability

### 3.3.1 Holdsworth Community Excursion to Bondi Park Consultation

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects and Waverley Council consulted with 11 young people (7 young men, 4 young women) with a disability on an excursion from Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach/Park with 5 support workers. The young people were all mobile and active, with a mix of Autism, Down Syndrome, Anxiety, Depression (usually in combination). Full notes of the consultation can be found in 0.

The main findings from the consultation are that young people enjoy novel play experiences scaled to their size, and that there are insufficient play spaces for older, bigger teenagers in the Waverley area.

Specific requests include:

#### Inclusive Play Experiences

- Dynamic Equipment is enjoyed by young people, especially group items:
  - Hammock Swing: popular choice for group interaction and the pleasure of the swing motion;
  - Group Multi-rocker: popular choice for group interaction and variety of sitting/standing;
  - Spinners: while individual spinners were used by some, group spinners were highly valued; and
  - Sliding and Climbing: not universally popular, and yet essential for some young people.
- Sensory Play:
  - Can be soothing for some e.g. sand play to reduce anxiety.
- Free Play:
  - Space for games such as tag.
- Animal interaction very popular:
  - For example, meeting dogs on leashes or looking at birds on the lawn.

#### Supportive Elements and Amenities

- Picnic tables and group seating:
  - Highly valued as a place to “settle”, a muster point, and a place to sleep if required;



- Group seating is essential;
  - Sheltered seating is highly desirable (e.g. picnic shelters at Bondi Park); and
  - A designated place provides a “safe space” from which to observe others.
- Shaded seating:
  - Important in summer as many will sit for extended periods, and some may sleep.
- Fenced perimeter:
  - Desirable as it helps the support workers know where the teens are.
- Toilets:
  - Essential to every outing and an important part of maintaining routine; and
  - Male/female toilets in one place to assist with chaperoning.
- Paths:
  - Provide comfort of “knowing where to go”.
- Transport:
  - Inclusive play spaces located near public transport, especially buses, is enabling to teens.
  - Bus-stops should be within 100m of a chosen destination.

## 3.4 Older People and Intergenerational Play

### 3.4.1 War Memorial Hospital Consultation

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects and Waverley Council consulted with two (2) staff representatives of the Uniting War Memorial Hospital to ascertain the needs and interests of their clients in terms of outdoor activities in parks. Key discussions focused on preventative health (prior to an injury) and rehabilitation (post injury), specifically:

- Activity groups for preventative health for people from the age of 60 and older, with the average age being 73.
- Rehabilitation for people recovering from an injury or surgery, with the average age being 85.

Full notes of the consultation can be found in Appendix H.

The main finding from the consultation is that there is great interest and benefit in provision of outdoor equipment for older people to maintain and boost their physical and mental wellbeing.

Specific requests include:

#### Equipment Considerations for Older People

- Equipment and spaces that are fun and motivating:
  - Legitimising use and making it apparent that the activity is ok for all ages and capabilities;
  - Swings with wide seats;
  - Flying foxes; and
  - Group spinners, rockers, swings.
- Keep equipment simple and uncomplicated;
- Fall prevention – a major concern for older people:
  - Equipment that promotes lower limb strength; and
  - Equipment that also targets balance training.
- Balance challenges are very beneficial for older people:
  - Graduated balance challenge with easy step up; and
  - Visually contrasting rubber pattern (linework) leading to a balance challenge and may provide the first stage of the balance challenge.
- Cognitive exercises – e.g. orienteering, musical items, and puzzles;

- Waverley Park – a desirable play space for intergenerational equipment as it is close to the hospital;
- Incidental exercise can be promoted through older people accompanying children to play spaces.

### Supportive Elements and Amenities

- Paths – could be the most cost-effective addition to play spaces for older people:
  - Interesting circumference paths around a play space;
  - Accessible paths allow users with wheelchairs and walkers to access the entire play space;
  - Paraplegic people would appreciate exciting pathways with differing landscape elements along the route, e.g. arches; and
  - Ground markings (e.g. at 100m intervals/800m round track) could be painted on paths as extra motivation for fitness and keeping track of progress.
- Technology to assist understanding of how to use equipment:
  - QR codes for smartphones; and
  - Whilst technology is not always well received by the elderly, it is adapting to be more user friendly and Waverley Council should stay informed about current trends.
- Older people need confidence and motivation to use spaces specifically designed for them:
  - Possible partnerships with rehab facilities to provide orientation sessions to transition from hospital to play spaces.
- Accessible parking is essential:
  - Minibus bays as many older people come in community buses.
- Seating – with arm rests and back rests at regular intervals;
- Natural setting – is welcoming and has wellbeing benefits.

### 3.4.2 Submission from South Eastern Sydney Local Health District on Intergenerational Play

A submission to the study was received from the Population Health Project Officer at South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (refer to Appendix I for the full submission).

The aim of the submission is “To develop a purpose built, inclusive and accessible outdoor intergenerational play space/ exercise park to improve the physical, mental and social well-being for people of all ages within our local communities”. The submission outlined the social and health benefits of play to all age groups from early childhood, through teenage years and into old age (e.g. “Research shows that adults who engage in play with children experience significant psychological and health benefits such as reduced stress, improved mood, greater cognitive skills and enhanced relationships”).

It also pointed out that “traditional play spaces are targeted at a younger demographic and tend to segregate the ages despite the setting being ideal to provide a play space for all ages and therefore bring the community together” and that in general “children’s play spaces are set up for passive adult involvement (i.e. sitting and supervision) rather than active participation”. Furthermore, the submission suggests that “Intergenerational play space facilities are widespread and highly successful in international communities such as USA, Europe, Spain and China”.

The submission requests the establishment of an intergenerational play space with the following characteristics:

- A dedicated and inclusive space;
- Purpose built equipment that targets key physiological elements from children and adults;
- Creative spaces to be used in a playful way;

- Intergenerational play space with something for everyone (not only focussed on children);
- Suitable for all ages and abilities (i.e. inclusive and accessible);
- Active and passive play spaces;
- Leverages the important role that grandparents play in contributing to childcare to benefit from the positive effects of play and physical activity; and
- Fosters a sense of community and builds social capital.



**FIGURE 3.2: EXAMPLES OF INTERGENERATIONAL PLAY**

# 4 Recommendations





## 4.1 Discussion of Results

The 173 people consulted across eight (8) consultations yielded rich data to consider in planning for the provision of inclusive play space across the Waverley LGA. The consultations provide valuable insights into the wishes of the Waverley community, as well as those of key stakeholders in the aged care and disability sectors. It also highlights the importance of inclusive play to people who do not normally deal with disability or special needs in their lives or work, suggesting that there is a general groundswell of interest from the community that values inclusion in public places and play spaces.

Whilst there are universally desired and required inclusive play experiences, it is also clear from the data that different age groups and user groups have specific needs. This Section collates the findings across all consultations. The Overall Inclusive Play Recommendations identify universally desirable inclusive play experiences, regardless of age or user group. These are followed by recommendations to cater for the specific requirements of the different user and age groups.

In considering these recommendations, it is important to manage expectations about what inclusive play is and is not. It is also important to convey that Council cannot realistically achieve something for everybody at every play space. It is anticipated that designers and planners will skilfully interpret these recommendations and balance them along with all the other parameters when providing or upgrading a public play space.

## 4.2 Values: Building Social Capital Through Inclusive Play

The consultation survey and sessions provided outcomes 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 proportion of responses (40%) to the online survey were from people who do not live or work with disability, which is indicative of community interest in inclusive play. Comments in the survey from non-target group respondents, as well as consultations with parents and carers of children without a disability, indicate that people would like to see play spaces that have been designed for everybody to use regardless of age, gender or ability. Residents and visitors to Waverley LGA are sophisticated and aware of opportunities to build social capital through provision of inclusive play spaces.

- **Enthusiasm for Intergenerational Play**

There is growing awareness and demand for opportunities for older people to participate in play, as well as the pleasure of intergenerational play between parents, grandparents and children. The community is enthusiastic about the health benefits of intergenerational play as well as the social, community-building aspects of facilitating play across the generations (e.g. equipment like the “You-and-Me Swing” allows an adult and child to swing together face-to-face). Intergenerational play is current best practice inclusive play provision.

- **Communication and Education Regarding Inclusive Play**

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

- **Inclusive Play Spaces Should be Recognisable**

A clear outcome from the consultation process is that some residents would like inclusive playgrounds to contain equipment with self-evident adaptations for various users with disabilities. In this way catering for people with disabilities is obvious to the onlooker.

This report acknowledges this outcome and sentiment, however, it is noted that the Best Practice Inclusive Design favours Universal Design Principles to be implemented wherever possible. This form of design favours usefulness to all members of the community in one design solution. It is suggested that websites and signage are used as communication tools to honour the above consultation outcome.

*More Inclusive spaces can provide more facilities for more people.*

Respondents indicated that an increase in the number of play spaces across the Local Government Area would be appreciated. With more diligent attention to design, the play spaces could appeal to a wider audience of people with disabilities e.g. for people who have severe physical disabilities.

## **4.3 Community Information about Inclusive Play in Waverley**

The comments in the survey and discussions with some non-target groups highlighted that the public may not recognise the inclusive and accessible play spaces already available in the Waverley area, suggesting that Waverley Council could communicate more about:

- What inclusive play is, what it looks like (and what it is not);
- The location of existing accessible and inclusive play spaces in Waverley LGA, and the degree to which they are accessible and inclusive;
- Managing community expectations by clarifying that an inclusive play space can't provide every experience for everyone, but should provide something that everyone can access and enjoy (and that there exists a mosaic of play spaces across Waverley that between them will cater for everybody); and
- Where existing inclusive and accessible play spaces can be found in the Waverley area.

## **4.4 Overall Recommendations for Inclusive Play in the Waverley LGA**

The Overall Recommendations consider the universal requests from the community for Inclusive Play across all the consultations. The Overall Recommendations include common design factors to consider for inclusive play spaces, prior to determining specific requirements for each age group. When considering these, the following definitions frame the context:

### **Inclusive Play Space:**

An Inclusive Play Space offers robust recreational and social opportunities for all people regardless of differences in capabilities, age, culture or gender. An inclusive play space accommodates everyone allowing them to be included in the play experience, play socially, choose from a range of activities and challenge themselves at their own developmental level. An inclusive play space can't provide every experience for everyone but should provide something that everyone can access and enjoy.



**Accessible:**

Adjustments made to buildings, equipment and public spaces to ensure that people with a disability can access and use buildings and public spaces, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act and Australian Standards.

The key messages are shown in three categories below. The community would like to see:

**Inclusive Principles:**

- Convenient location for easy access from all parts of the LGA, especially for organisations providing services e.g. Wairoa School, War Memorial Hospital;
- Facilities to support longer stays;
- Opportunities for people with and without disabilities to play alongside each other;
- Opportunities for people (especially children) with disabilities to play independently and autonomously;
- Involve experts in inclusive design/universal design;
- An easily accessed website or app to list and communicate inclusive play spaces and facilities to the community and visitors to the Waverley area;
- Better community education about inclusive play (including what it is and how it is catered for in play spaces, e.g. not just Liberty Swings) and location of these play spaces; and
- Clarity about Australian Standards (e.g. AS 1428) and guidelines (e.g. NSW Everyone Can Play Guideline).

**Accessible and Inclusive Play Experiences:**

- Selection of a variety of equipment for play spaces:
  - Static equipment (e.g. climbing, somersault bars, monkey bars, balancing); and
  - Moving equipment (e.g. swings, slides, flying fox, spinners, rockers).
- Accessible equipment for people with mobility issues as well as wheelchairs;
- Nature Play:
  - Accessible experiences of being amongst trees, rocks, logs, plants, sand, water.
- Sensory Play:
  - Sensory gardens for children and older people;
  - Equipment to stimulate senses, such as sound or music play; and
  - Sand and water play elements.
- Social Play - fully accessible and inclusive experiences such as:
  - Intergenerational equipment; and
  - Group equipment such as group swings, hammocks, group spinners.
- Spaces for cognitive, solo and quiet play:
  - Quiet zones away from active play.
- Age appropriate play equipment and experiences for children, young people, adults and older people.

**Supportive elements and amenities:**

- Parking and road safety:
  - Accessible parking;
  - Nearby parking;
  - Enough parking spaces;
  - Safe road crossings; and
  - Kerbside ramps.
- Accessible pathways:
  - Easy access from car or bus stop to play space;
  - Smooth pathways within the play space;
  - Handrails and kerbs on steeper paths;

- Unitary surfacing around accessible play equipment (avoid mulch as this hinders mobility and can affect people with sensory issues);
- Tactile indicators;
- Places to park wheelchairs, strollers and mobility devices in play spaces; and
- Gentle slopes only.
- Access to cafe and coffee;
- Enclosed play space:
  - Perimeter fencing;
  - Secure, self-closing gates;
  - Double gated airlocks are valued by some people (but seen as a detraction by others); and
  - Gates need to be easily opened by people with a disability.
- Toilets:
  - More toilets located close to play spaces so that people can stay longer;
  - Accessible toilets; and
  - Toilets nearby, with easy access from play space and car park.
- Supportive amenities:
  - Shade and shelter (incl. shelter from winds);
  - Picnic tables connected to paths;
  - Picnic tables accessible (and usable) for wheelchairs/people with walkers;
  - Group seating e.g. 3 picnic tables together;
  - Wheelchair-height water bottle refill stations and bubblers; and
  - Seating with backs and armrests to allow supervision and provide rest stops.
- Safety:
  - The community needs to be reassured of the safety of co-locating adult and children's play experiences;
  - People who accompany play space excursions for people with a disability need to feel that play spaces are safe and secure e.g. fencing, gates, proper latches; and
  - Road safety for getting people with disabilities in and out of vehicles and into a play space.

## 4.5 Special Recommendations for Infants, Toddlers and Preschool Children

Play spaces often do not have adequate scaling of equipment and play experiences for small children and are hence often not inclusive of this age group. This places an extra burden on carers to ensure safety of the children as well as find novel ways to engage them on equipment more suited to older children. It is important that play spaces are scaled for these very small children.

The following play experiences are recommended to cater for very young children, in addition to the above Overall Recommendations.

### **Inclusive Play Experiences:**

- A separate area for very young children so that they are not run into by older children and where carers can more easily keep them in one place, rather than running between scattered items of equipment across a play space;
- Equipment and experiences scaled for small children with:
  - Easy access to enter/climb on and exit/climb off;
  - Extra postural supports and handholds to help them feel secure, e.g. bucket baby swing, handles on equipment;
  - Low to the ground; and
  - Enclosed spaces to crawl into.
- Quiet corner or space for children with sensory issues to withdraw safely from the “hubbub” of a busy play space;

- Sensory play activities for small children:
  - Sand play in a separate sand pit in a quiet corner for digging, feeling sand through fingers and toes;
  - Activity boards on the fence at toddler height with items that they can spin, push, rock etc.; and
  - Music play scaled for smaller children (at their height).
- Specific equipment and experiences for babies and early walkers, for example:
  - Bucket seat swing;
  - Block stairs to crawl/climb;
  - Low lying play gym;
  - Mounds to crawl up; and
  - Tunnels to crawl through.
- Social play experiences:
  - Equipment like “You-and-Me” swing for carers or grandparents to interact with the child; and
  - Group equipment for several small children to use at once (e.g. hammock close to the ground).

### **Supportive Elements and Amenities**

- Level pathways and access to equipment to avoid trip hazards for small children and ease navigation with strollers and mobility devices;
- Nappy change areas with flat surfaces to lay baby and nappy bags, etc. (to be above ground level and clean);
- Hand washing facilities for carers changing nappies, as well as for children before they eat;
- Stroller and mobility device parking within the fenced play area to avoid congestion caused by many strollers at peak use times;
- Seating and picnic facilities - for eating and social interaction:
  - More flat “platform” seating for young children to picnic on or gather on in groups (also useful for nappy changing).
- Spacious grassy areas for:
  - For young children to eat in groups and play on picnic rugs;
  - For free play or simple ball games; and
  - For sensory play to feel grass texture, rolling, etc.
- Under-surfacing:
  - If mulch is used, levels must be maintained, as a slightly lower level may not impact older children, but it makes a difference for very small children in accessing equipment or navigating transitions to rubber or concrete surfaces.

## 4.6 Special Recommendations for Children with a Disability

There is a general perception that play spaces cater mainly for children up to 10 years old. One intent of this Study is to broaden focus from this age group to other age groups. Nevertheless, when designing inclusive and accessible play spaces, the following play experiences are recommended to cater for children aged 5-11 years and school students with a disability in addition to the above Overall Recommendations.

### Inclusive Play Experiences:

- Accessible equipment and play experiences scaled for this age group;
- For children in wheelchairs:
  - Things that make sounds e.g. doorbells, buttons to press (with wheelchair wheels);
  - Things that are dazzling to look at;
  - Textures to touch;
  - Water in various forms – sprinklers, fountains and trickling down a wall where it can be touched; and
  - Wheelchair accessible trampolines.
- For children with sensory processing disorders:
  - Water as a multi-sensory experience;
  - Sand play as a sensory experience;
  - Mulch as a tactile experience; and
  - Vestibular equipment sized for this age group.
- Accessible Nature Play:
  - Stick and clay making programs; and
  - Foliage is very popular – ensure that plants are non-toxic to eat.
- Minimal exits from climbing equipment above ground level (children don't know where to go, makes supervision difficult from ground level);
- Location and provision of inclusive play across a variety of small and large inclusive play spaces across the LGA:
  - Wairoa Park – a potential key play space adjacent to Wairoa School - at least one accessible play experience.

### Supportive Elements and Amenities

- Fencing at Wairoa Reserve to support Wairoa School student safety;
- Accessible and even pathways along roadways for mobility devices to walk to and from special schools to play spaces;
- Accessible toilets with nappy change facilities for larger children and students;
- Ramps at street crossings:
  - Easy access for unsteady children; and
  - Cue for behaviour at road crossings.
- Even concrete pathways along the streets:
  - Allow walking from school to play spaces;
  - Easier to walk on than grass – especially with mobility devices;
  - Cue behaviour “we walk here”; and
  - Safer road crossings.
- Accessible pathways with hard surfaces:
  - Smooth entry to play spaces for mobility devices and no trip hazards;
  - Ease of navigating plays-paces with mobility devices; and
  - Crucial for older and heavier students in mobility devices.
- Toilets:
  - Non-gendered or family toilets essential for teachers to help students.

- Edges with luminance contrast to cater for children with vision impairment transitioning between materials;
- For Wairoa reserve – a potential key play space as it is adjacent to Wairoa School:
  - Fencing;
  - Top up mulch levels; and
  - Replace stairs with a ramp.

## 4.7 Special Recommendations for Young People with a Disability

Young people with disabilities are particularly interested in play spaces and play activities. They are very keen to have engaging experiences in outdoor settings. They enjoy novel, challenging play experiences scaled to their size, and there is a demand for more play spaces for teenagers in the Waverley area. The following play experiences are recommended to cater for young people, in addition to the above Overall Recommendations.

### Inclusive Play Experiences

- Dynamic group equipment such as:
  - Hammock swing;
  - Group multi-rocker;
  - Group spinners;
  - Slides;
  - Individual play equipment (e.g. single spinner);
  - Individual swing seats; and
  - Flying foxes are very much appreciated.
- Sensory play, e.g. sand or water-based play to reduce anxiety;
- Space for free play games such as tag; and
- Animal interaction opportunities e.g. meeting dogs on leashes or look at birds on the turf.

### Supportive Elements and Amenities

- Group settings of picnic tables and grouped seating, both as a place to “settle” and as a muster point;
- Sleeping teens also need to be considered (provide either platform seats or picnic tables);
- Shaded and sheltered seating;
- All seating needs to be socially organised and generously provided (young people need personal space);
- A fenced perimeter to help support carers know where the teens are;
- Toilets are essential to every outing and an important part of maintaining routine;
- Paths to provide comfort for “knowing where to go”; and
- Inclusive play spaces located near public transport, especially buses, is enabling to young people. (bus stops should be within 100m of a chosen destination).

## 4.8 Special Recommendations for Older People

Older people value being in play spaces to accompany grandchildren, be active themselves, or simply watch children play. It is vital that play spaces support their needs to keep them active in the community. The main finding from the consultation is that there is great interest and benefit in provision of outdoor equipment for older people to maintain and boost their physical and mental wellbeing. Incidental exercise can be promoted through accompanying children to play spaces.

The following play experiences are recommended to cater for older people, in addition to the above Overall Recommendations.

### Equipment Considerations for Older People:

- Equipment and spaces that are fun and motivating:
  - Legitimising use and making it apparent that the activity is ok for all ages and capabilities;
  - Swings with wide seats;
  - Flying foxes; and
  - Group spinners, rockers, swings (e.g. “You-and-Me” swing).
- Keep equipment simple and uncomplicated;
- Equipment that builds and maintains mobility, co-ordination and balance:
  - Equipment that promotes lower limb strength;
  - Equipment that targets balance training e.g. graduated balance challenge; and
  - Visually contrasting rubber pattern (linework) leading to a graduated balance challenge.
- Cognitive exercises, e.g. orienteering, musical items, and puzzles.

### Supportive Elements and Amenities:

- Paths provide a cost-effective addition to play spaces for older people:
  - Interesting looped circumference path around a play space, e.g. with different landscape elements such as arches;
  - Accessible paths to allow users with wheelchairs and walkers to access the entire play space; and
  - Ground markings (e.g. at 100m intervals) painted on paths as extra motivation for fitness, rehabilitation, and keeping track of progress.
- Technology considerations to assist understanding of how to use equipment, e.g. QR codes for smartphones;
- Possible partnerships with rehab facilities to build confidence for older people to use public equipment, e.g. orientation sessions to transition from hospital to play spaces;
- Accessible parking is essential;
- Provision of minibus services and accessible parking bays;
- Seating, with armrests and backrests at regular intervals;
- Natural setting (is welcoming and has additional well-being benefits);
- Signage welcoming older people in the play space; and
- Planting and sense of naturalness to evoke/stimulate memory.



## 4.9 Special Recommendations for Intergenerational and Adult Play

There is a growing awareness and demand for opportunities for adults and older people to participate in play experiences, as well as to have the pleasure of intergenerational play between parents, grandparents and children. Designers need to consider providing intergenerational play opportunities in play spaces.

The following recommendations cater for adults in play spaces, in addition to the above Overall Recommendations.

### **Play Experiences:**

- Sophisticated equipment scaled to adults, with an “adult” aesthetic;
- Group play items such as group spinner, group swing, large flying fox;
- Equipment suitable for all ages and abilities (i.e. inclusive and accessible);
- Intergenerational equipment, e.g. “You-and-Me” swing;
- Specialised equipment for older people to maintain encourage agility, balance and co-ordination (as opposed to muscle, strength and cardiac exercise);
- Adult exercise spaces and equipment co-located with children’s play spaces;
- Active and passive play spaces;
- Clear signage and instructions about the purpose and use of specialised equipment for adults;
- Safety messages to reassure safety concerns about adults in play spaces with children; and
- Intriguing cognitive puzzles, e.g. “impossible triangle”.

### **Types of Adult Play Activities:**

- Family interaction and group play;
- Rehabilitation activities;
- Practising of skills;
- Watching others at play; and
- Play for its own sake.

### **Supportive Elements and Amenities:**

- Generous group seating, convivially arranged;
- Generous lawn areas for larger parties; and
- Signage.

## 4.10 Conclusion: How to Use This Report

The results of this consultation with the community and outlying stakeholders regarding inclusive play, show that there is enthusiasm across all sectors of the community for public provision of outdoor inclusive play in the Waverley LGA. Recommendations for inclusive play space provision have been developed from the community consultations, which can be used in the following applications:

- **Augmentation of the Play Space Strategy 2014-2019**

The recommendations underpin the Inclusive Play Space Study principles, which in turn support the existing Play Plan for the ongoing development and maintenance of Waverley's public play spaces.

- **Play Space Upgrades**

The individual and combined recommendations in this Report can be used to inform the process of future play space upgrades, along with site specific upgrades. For example, if an individual rocker in a pocket park is being replaced, an inclusive rocker can take its place.

- **New Play Spaces**

The individual and combined recommendations in this Report can be used to inform the design process of new play spaces. This fine-grained information can be applied, along with play space-specific public consultations held at the time for the site. This may give designers further guidance, for example, being certain of age and ability preferences for play.

- **New Types of Inclusive Play Provision**

The individual comments and preferences in this study provide invaluable information on all types of play that all people enjoy, often beyond traditional play space provision. This gives Waverley Council clear evidence of demand and guidance on the new or augmented types of play facilities such as intergenerational play equipment, equipment to build and maintain agility and balance for older people, quiet spaces for people with sensory processing disorders