

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES REPORT

April 2022

The *St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan* (2018) identified a series of improvements for St Leonards Park that have been implemented over time as funding has become available. Council allocated funding for the investigations, consultation, design, improvement and an expansion of the existing playground in the 2021/22 budget.

Between 3 November and 5 December 2021, the detailed concept plan based on the recommendations presented in the Landscape Masterplan was presented to the community for consultation.

It was proposed that the existing playground will be upgraded and expanded to the west of the current site, providing opportunities for older children's adventure play area, along with areas for nature play in the integrated garden spaces.

The existing playground layout and facilities has served the community well and is much-loved. Therefore, the existing junior playground will remain within its current boundaries and a new extension to the west will be dedicated for children 12 years and older.

The objectives of the proposed playground improvement aim to create a refurbished and expanded playground that:

- retains the existing leafy, garden character of the playground
- provides a variety of play equipment for a range of ages and abilities, offering inclusive play opportunities
- provides a pleasant environment for parents and carers with an adequate amount of seating positioned to facilitate easy supervision
- provides maximum play value by offering many different types of activities (spinning, swinging, climbing, sliding, bouncing, balancing, climbing etc.)

Council received six submissions during the exhibition period. All submissions expressed support for the proposed playground upgrade. Feedback was received on six subjects:

1. safety and access
2. new play equipment
3. new park furniture
4. undersurfacing
5. shade and shelter
6. general feedback

A summary of submissions is presented in the table below. Based on the submissions, Council will proceed with the implementation of the proposed upgrade.

Thank you for participating in the community consultation, Council will proceed to the quotation stage and implementation of works in the coming weeks.

SUBJECT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE/ACTION
Safety and access	'Fence around the whole playground for safety'	<p>Council offers playground visitors a choice of fenced, partially fenced and unfenced playgrounds. While fencing is appropriate in some locations, for example near the waterfront, or if the playground is naturally almost fully enclosed, fences are not desirable in all locations. In large parks fences visually disturb the continuity of open space areas, creating a barrier between the playground and the rest of the park. They can interfere with informal play and impede running games that are important contributors to children's physical fitness and health. They can also discourage teenagers as they make a playground look more 'junior' or uncool.</p> <p>Fences and gates can make playground access challenging for less mobile and elderly visitors and can send an (unintentional) message to parents and carers that supervision of children (and sometimes dogs) is not required.</p> <p>Council's Playgrounds brochure: 'A Place to Play', which can be downloaded from Council's website, has information showing which playgrounds are fenced.</p>
	'Ensure all areas of the playground are visible to parents for safety'	Clear sightlines have been considered in the design of the new playground, however full visibility will not be possible as there is existing vegetation and play equipment which will be in the way.
	'Access to this area needs to be appropriate for people with strollers/wheelchairs. The paths are used by adult cyclists and it is often very dangerous with small children running to get to this play area and having cyclists dodge both them and the parents/carers.'	The design specifically addresses the needs of users with disability and a secondary path system is developed to allow circulation between the two sections of the playground without the need to access major footpaths within the St Leonards Park.
New play equipment	'incorporate a zip line'	Proposed design allows for an installation of a track ride which is a version of a zip line.
	'keep the music area!'	The musical area will be retained as part of the proposal. The majority of the existing musical pieces will be restored and given a new life. Additional musical items will be installed as part of the upgrade.
	'monkey bars' 'Also it would be good if the monkey bars were as comprehensive as in the photo example. From the aerial view, it looks like it is a single length only.'	Nature inspired custom designed monkey bars have been specified for the area dedicated to older children. This play element will be challenging but will sit well within a combination of activities offered in the older kids play area.
	'Cubby house'	Proposed as part of the area dedicated to older children is a six metre high 'Eagles Nest' structure. This provides four honeycomb nest baskets suspended at different heights which give a great 'hang-out' zones and rest points for older children. The baskets can only be accessed by a scramble of nets, ladders and climbing chimneys or hanging ropes.

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	'If possible could a fireman's pole be included, perhaps as part of the slide structure or eagles nest.' ...	The combination unit proposed as a replacement for an existing play structure in the junior playground has a fireman's pole incorporated in its design. However, this unit will only be installed if the budget allows. Please note that the existing play structure also has a fireman's pole as one of the play elements.
	'Please ensure the accessible spinner is actually pushable. They are often installed in such a way that they are almost impossible to get moving, rendering them useless to everyone.'	The Inclusive Orbit by Playdale Playgrounds is proposed to be installed over a rubber softfall surface in the junior play area. This is a strong and innovative play structure which has been successfully utilised in many playgrounds around NSW.
	'Please make sure there is at least one swing for bigger kids out of the 4 in the smaller playground (not just baby swings as pictured).'	There are two strap seats proposed as part of the swing unit which is to be located in the junior playground. Additionally, there will be a giant 360 swing with a nest installed in the zone dedicated to older children.
	'I use this a lot with my grandchildren. I would very much like to see is that the seat of the swing for very, very small children has a higher back than the one there now. With the higher back, it means the children cannot lean back, above all, their heads cannot fall backwards as their neck muscles are not very strong. The example of the seat which I feel is the appropriate design for small children is located on the swing in Shelley Park at Hunters Hill. It has all the usual safety buckles and straps but has a very firm supportive back.'	The swings are intended for children of at least 6 months of age and with good head control. According to BabyCenter (When babies can go on swings BabyCenter) most children will not be ready for a swing until they are 8 or 9 months, but for some it is closer to a year. Two swing enclosed infant seats are being proposed as part of the swing unit to be located in the junior playground area. Swing enclosed infant seats are suitable for children who have good head control, are slash proof with steel insert and offer extra stability. Swing junior inclusive seat with an extended back is designed with children with disability in mind but it is not suitable for infants.
	'the slide structure seems to be predominately metal. Will it be positioned in the shade to make it useable in summer?'	The slide being proposed as part of the combination unit is positioned in the junior play area which is surrounded by mature trees providing natural shade.
	'I can't tell from the plan if the maze is planting or asphalt, but if it is planting, it will get instantly destroyed by footfall, scooters etc, being as it is at an intersection.'	Proposed maze is a pattern which will be incorporated into the circular paving area in the play space for older children.
	'a water play section would be really fun.'	Sand and water play have been proposed as part of the upgrade in the junior play area.
New park furniture	'Seating for carers / parents is welcome as this is sadly lacking.' 'More seating for adults near the action'	Additional informal and formal seating is being proposed as part of the playground upgrade. Park seats are being placed throughout the junior and senior playgrounds.
Undersurfacing	'Bouncy floor for the whole playground (not wood chips)'	While rubber undersurfacing makes playgrounds easily accessible to all the community, when compared to organic soft fall (i.e. leaves etc), it is extremely expensive. Council's playgrounds budgets are tight, and the emphasis must be on maximising play value. Organic soft fall is a comparatively economical undersurfacing material that provides a soft landing, can be traversed by strollers, complements the general park environs and is reasonably easily maintained. Additionally, it allows

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		<p>water and nutrients through to tree root systems and protects the root zone from compaction.</p> <p>Children's outdoor play can be messy and it should be this way. Children learn from touching and interacting with all kinds of materials: making mud pies and building cubby houses are just a couple of examples of play that involves children getting dirty while learning new skills, co-operating with others and, most importantly, having fun.</p>
Shade and shelter	'Keep the shading of the trees.'	There are no trees nominated for removal as part of this proposal. Additional tree planting is proposed in the new section of the playground.
	'Shelter is a must.'	Existing picnic shelter is proposed to be retained and refurbished as part of the playground upgrade.
General feedback	'I am very supportive of this proposal. I'm a mum of older tweens who have largely outgrown the existing park and many times I have seen larger kids keen to use the existing park to play which can be hard when little and big kids are mixing in close confines. I think the older kids play area will be a wonderful addition to St Leonards Park. It will keep encouraging them to be active outdoors.'	Noted
	'Thank you to the council for looking after our younger residents. It is great to have some challenging equipment planned for older kids. Thank you'	Noted
	'I think the proposal for the revamping of the St. Leonards Park Playground is excellent as it is very well patronised. The children love it and always want to return!' ... 'The ambience must stay the same as it has the feeling of an intimate playground in the middle of the park with lots of trees and plantings.'	Noted
	'As a parent of a 3 year old and a 1 year old, I would like to see the park remain a space for up to 5 year old. It would be a mistake to make it cater to too many age groups. Willoughby Park is a good park recently redeveloped and I thought worked well were the in-ground trampolines, the wide slide that fits adult and child side by side and the tunnel underneath. The high ropes course is fun and challenging but too often overrun by bigger kids who climb on the outside and climb on top of the covered slide.'	Noted

