



Parks for People
Phase 1 Engagement Outcomes Report
Appin, Wollondilly

September, 2020

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All care has been taken to prepare this report for the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

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Acknowledgement

This document acknowledges that Appin is on Aboriginal land where the traditional custodians have been caring for Country for more than 70,000 years.

We pay our respects to the traditional owners of this land, their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the continued rich culture and heritage of all Aboriginal people on this land.

“This park should be more for open space recreation, not sporting events or massive playgrounds. It should be a link to our natural environment and also to our Aboriginal heritage.”

– Social Pinpoint participant

Executive Summary

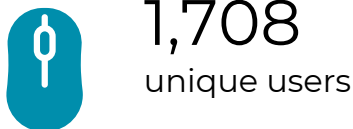
In 2020, the New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) commissioned JOC Consulting to assist with the delivery of community engagement for the new park in Appin as part of the Parks for People program. The first round of consultation consisted of an online survey and social pinpoint map available for community comment between 2 and 22 September 2020.

In total, 146 community members were very supportive of the new park project, and participants expressed opinions and ideas that were passionate, nuanced, and largely positive. It was evident that community members are eager for greater opportunities to engage with their natural environment and have a unified vision for the site of the new park in Appin. These ideas along with community values and priorities in relation to Tench Reserve have been captured in this Engagement Outcomes Report.

Who participated in the consultation?



74 online survey
participants



146 people
participated across the
two platforms

72 social pinpoint
comments



Participants **ranged in age**
from 18 to 76+ years old



99%
were local
residents
88% living in Appin
11% in neighbouring
suburbs

66%
female



The main age brackets
were **26–35 year old** (34%)
36 – 45 year old (26%)



81% live
within 10
minutes
walk of the
park



33%
male

N.B. Demographic statistics relating to online survey only

What did we hear?

Top three vision statements were:

1



A place for adventure and discovery through the natural landscape (26% of respondents)

2



A fun place with lots of different activities and play equipment (22% of respondents)

3



A peaceful place to relax and wind down (19% of respondents)

Top four priorities were:

- Leveraging the natural beauty of the site as a foundation to deliver an open space for play, relaxation, celebration and education.
- Building a healthier, happier, more creative community through opportunities to play and get active.
- Strengthening the community's connection to place and landscape by creating greater access to the natural environment.
- Connected cycleways, bike trails and walking trails
- Play spaces integrated and learning from nature
- Spaces for social and family gatherings
- Formal and informal learning opportunities across the site

The top three things missing from the area:

The engagement uncovered the need for greater provision and access to open space in the Appin –Wollondilly Area.

- Walking/ hiking tracks and trails – 51%
- Water features – 49%
- Natural areas and parks – 41%

Project risks and considerations:

As a new park, building a sense of trust and community buy-in is an important aspect of the Appin project. The following themes were identified during the round 1

engagement, and should be addressed by the Department, to ensure continued community support for the new park project.

Whilst the project received broad support from all engagement participants, the community's concerns all relate to those elements of the current site that may be removed or at risk as a result of the new park. The displacement of koalas, current tenants, and the removal of trees where common concerns captured during the engagement.

Koala population

The koala is an important part of the local identity of Appin, and the significance of the park's neighbouring koala corridor was the number one concerns captured during the engagement. 72 out of the total 74 survey participants provided a recommendation on how to conserve the koala population on site

The community do not wish to see the new park come at the expense of protecting the local koala population, but did commonly recognise the opportunity for the new park to include a koala conservation and opportunities to educate people on the risks facing the animal.

It should be noted that the round 1 engagement for the new park at Appin took place during the publication of a recent study into the decimation of the koala population due to the Black Summer Bushfires; something that was referenced in a number of community comments, such as the following from a Social Pinpoint participant; "With so much development earmarked for the Greater Macarthur Growth Area, it is essential that as much of the land as possible along the Georges River be preserved for wildlife especially the koalas. Their very survival is going to depend upon it. Koalas will be a real drawcard for local and overseas visitors. Wollondilly Shire Council and the State Government need to protect our wildlife which has suffered badly during the Black Summer Bushfires."

Current site tenants

Four separate survey participants expressed a desire to see the current tenants remain on site. While none of these participants believed this concern should halt the project, they did express that the current tenants hold a skillset that is essential to koala conservation, and could play a key role in realising this vision. In addition to this, participants highlighted the age of the current tenants as a particular risk in displacing them.

Protecting the environment

Protecting the environment and improving the local ecology is the number 1 priority uncovered during the community engagement – maintaining broad community support for the project will be greatly dependent upon how well the concept design responds to this priority.

Aligning with project objectives

Objectives table:

Successful engagement acknowledges the importance of the role that community plays in helping to achieve the project objectives. The below tables outline how the engagement findings relate to the Objectives identified during the Appin visioning workshop.

Project Objective	What the community said
To demonstrate how public open space can adjoin koala habitat with no adverse impact on habitat through complementary uses and creative design solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Koala conservation and quality open spaces are not mutually exclusive, but require excellent design and uncompromising commitment to conserving the habitat ▪ The koala habitat should be a defining characteristic of the proposed park, and inform the uses ▪ The park provides an opportunity to educate and promote the threatened koala population
To create a park that encourages community access to, and engagement with, the natural landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Appin-Wollondilly area needs access to open space and the natural landscape ▪ The new park is an important entry point to a visionary network of open space across the LGA ▪ The connection to the land is an important value for the community ▪ Access to the natural landscape should not compromise the ecology of the area ▪ The park provides a formal gateway to the Georges River
To complement the natural landscape and is distinctive to Appin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing the natural environment is the number 1 priority for the community, and should not be compromised during the creation of a new park
To create a regional open space that attracts visitation from the wider community for its nature-based recreation and education opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new park will create a gateway to a regional trail network that will attract tourists from around Australia ▪ Local residents currently travel outside the LGA to access high quality play spaces and water play ▪ The natural features of the site should be used to inspire recreational play and exercise

The Landscape Benefit Table

The following table outlines how the engagement findings and what the community has told us, relates to the Landscape Architecture Foundation and University of New South Wales' research into the Social, Economic, Environmental and Cultural (SEEC) benefits for the Parks for People project.

	Where are we today?	Where do we want to be?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community want more open space across the LGA The community highlighted the need for high quality play spaces in the area The community highlighted the insufficient provision of play spaces and recreational areas for infants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park will include play spaces that encourage inter-generational socialising The park will provide respite from fast paced urban life (This priority was nominated three times as often in women as men)
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community currently travel outside the LGA for larger social gatherings in open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park will provide economic benefits through food and beverage and educational opportunities The park will be a gateway for a regional trail network that could generate tourism from within NSW and wider Australia
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park site is home to an increasingly threatened koala population The adjacent swimming hole is currently contaminated and a site for dumping The site provides an access point to the George's River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park will provide a koala sanctuary, and opportunities for education in environmental conservation The park will play a vital role in koala conservation The creation and management of the park will improve the ecology of the site, including the neighbouring bodies of water The park will provide opportunities for the community to connect with the natural landscape The park will provide opportunities to engage with the George's River
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The koala is an important part of the local cultural identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any art included in the site should be inspired by local koala population

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The area has a rich indigenous history ▪ There currently exists a 4x4 and trail-bike culture on the neighbouring sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new park will provide educational opportunities in environmental conservation and protection ▪ The new park will not include provision for 4x4 or trail-bike riding koala conservation and quality open space are not mutually exclusive
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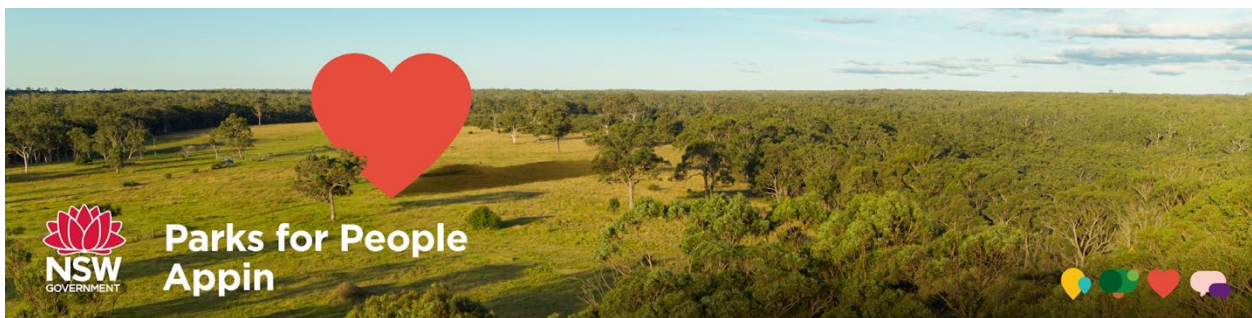
The following pages provide more detail on community feedback collected during the engagement period.

About the project

Background

The new Appin Park (the Park) will be created as part of the Parks for People program, an ambitious NSW Government initiative that focuses on the creation of high-quality open space by creating new parks or upgrading existing ones. This project sees the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) collaborating with Wollondilly Shire Council and the local community to transform the space to create a refuge where the community can gather, learn and grow together.

The Park is located within the Greater Macarthur growth area identified in the Wollondilly Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and is forecast to be home to an additional 40,000 residents by 2036. Access to quality open space will be of increasing importance as the community grows and evolves, and getting the planning right is vital in ensuring the community's needs are met.



Purpose of engagement

The purpose of the first round of engagement was to better understand the community's aspirations for the new park in Appin. It focused on gaining and understanding of community values, as well as gaining insight into how the community wants to use the space, the facilities needed in the park to support their desired activities, and the general community sentiment around the project. The engagement was motivated by a desire to create a world-class park that is aligned with the needs and characteristics of the local community.

In total, 146 people were engaged through the online survey or social pinpoint map. The design of the survey questions and engagement approach was guided by a key question: "How can we create a world-class park that is loved and well-used by the community, and supports their vision for the future?"

This report consolidates the feedback received by the community for consideration by the design team in preparing preliminary concepts for further discussion.

What we heard

Introduction

Community feedback on the Park offered a diversity of insights but most participants want the preservation and conservation of flora and fauna to be the guiding principle in delivering an open space for both play and relaxation.

The community recognised the natural landscape as the greatest asset on the site, and wished to leverage the natural features unique to Appin Park - such as river access, koala habitats, and accessibility to surrounds - to improve user experience, all while constructing a narrative focussed on local participation and contribution.

The word cloud, created using the most common phrases on social pinpoint, convey the community's desired features and visions for the upgrade to Tench Reserve.







Values:

In relation to open space in Appin, the community values:

- Living in harmony with the environment: The Appin community recognise the unique assets of their natural landscape, and feel a sense of custodianship over the preservation of these spaces.
- Fair and equitable access: The need to accommodate all members of the community, and provide space that enables inter-generational interaction is important to this community that is heavily dominated by family households.
- Connection to the land: The ability to connect and engage with the landscape is an important part of the Appin lifestyle. Whether this be through play, adventure, sports or relaxation, being amongst the landscape is a fundamental component of how Appin lives.

Priorities:

The community feedback can be grouped under three key priority themes –

1	Celebrating the Landscape 	Leveraging the natural beauty of the site as a foundation to deliver an open space for play, relaxation, celebration and education.
2	Promoting Play 	Building a healthier, happier, more creative community through opportunities to play and get active.
3	Creating Access to Open Space 	Strengthening the community's connection to place and landscape by creating greater access to the natural environment.
4	Offering Relaxation and Respite 	Utilising the innate tranquillity of the landscape to creating an escape from the stresses and strains of urban life.

The following pages further outline each of these priorities, along with the challenges and opportunities identified by the community, and the design implications of the engagement findings.

Priority 1 – Celebrating the Landscape

“I would like to see the already naturally beautiful landscape enhanced for people to enjoy with children and pets, whilst protecting the koala population that exists in Appin.”

– Survey participant

The natural beauty of the Appin landscape is widely considered the future park’s greatest asset, and the need to preserve this attribute was the highest priority identified during the first round of community engagement. The community wish to leverage the diverse native vegetation and koala habitat, to enable users to enjoy this space in a way that is sensitive to these elements, and improves the local ecology.



What people said

The most common themes captured during the engagement were those that directly related to the values of the community, and particular the sense of connection and custodianship that they feel over their local environment, and the protection of the koala population that is fundamental to the identity of the area.

1. Protecting the environment

The need to protect the natural landscape was considered the most important requirement for the new park at Appin – a view shared by more survey participants than any other piece of feedback received. When asked “*what are the top three elements to creating an amazing new park in Appin?*”, 68% of participants selected “Protection of the Natural Environment”, a trend evident across all age groups. Furthermore, when asked to consider big ideas for the new park, *Environmental Conservation* was the third most common recommendation, where participants nominated a range of additional actions ranging from increasing the current tree canopy, to the cultivation of more native plants, and some ideas suggesting the park not proceed in the interest of leaving the land untouched. The broad community support for this priority is perhaps succinctly captured in one social Pinpoint pin which stated “Keep this space as a bushland type of experience; no skate parks; stages, or sports fields. This should be for the celebration of our natural environment”.

2. Koala Conservation

The importance of the koala, and the need to celebrate and protect the local koala population is a part of the local identity, and the community consider it a defining characteristic of the new park. Beyond being the most common word captured during the Social Pinpoint, the fundamental importance of the local koala population was highlighted in the community visions nominated in the survey, in which a *Koala Conservation* was envisaged by 80% of all alternate suggestions and was also the most common recommendation when survey participants were asked to nominate a single big ideas for the new park.

The local community highly value the rich landscape of the site, wanting it to retain its natural state and function as a koala habitat for the local koala population. They expressed a desire to leave the landscape largely untouched, with any amenities or facilities being integrated into the landscape. While conservation was a common theme throughout many of the responses, it came across more strongly in the survey rankings with most participants ranking it in their top three priorities.

3. Tree Canopy

Congruent with the above themes, the importance of preserving and increasing the total tree canopy was a specific action commonly recommended throughout the engagement. Shading and Trees was consider the second most important element to creating an amazing park at Appin, and was often nominated as an essential action to creating a koala conservation, as outlined in a number of Social Pinpoint comments, such as “Try to keep as many of the trees as possible in order to keep as much habitat for local koalas as possible.”

Challenges

- To create an active and explorative space with suitable amenities, that is harmonious with the natural environment, and does not compromise the natural koala habitat.
- When considered in isolation, the overwhelming support for environmental preservation and/ or conservation on the site would be considered a fundamental barrier to delivering a space that is loved by the community. However, the nuanced nature of these individuals' responses highlights a community that acknowledges conservation and preservation of the natural landscape as the greatest opportunity to create a world-class park that is environmentally sensitive and improves the local ecology.

Opportunities and design ideas

- Create a best practice design for the cohabitation of people and endangered species – including the koala
 - Establishing measurable, promotable environmental preservation metrics for the project
 - Embracing the landscape and koala into the identity of the Park
 - Acknowledging and preserving the vital tree to the koala habitat (irrespective of whether in the koala corridor or not)
 - Hospital care and rehabilitation for koala population
 - Investigating the level of interaction between park users and wildlife
 - Wildlife bridges/ overpasses for roads or built areas
- Leveraging natural environment for educational opportunities – formal and informal
- Leveraging the natural assets of the site to create opportunities for play, relaxation, education and socialising
- Creating a sense of community connection through tree planting or adoption opportunities
- Creating opportunities to engage with the landscape in an environmentally responsible manner
- Increasing total tree canopy within the Park

Priority 2 – Promoting Play

“Family outdoor areas come in many different forms; walking paths, water fun, picnic areas, signage of local flora and fauna, kids play equipment, park maps.” – Social Pinpoint participant

The family orientated community of Appin and the surrounding suburbs greatly value the importance of play, discovery and keeping active. Across all age brackets, engagement participants want to see opportunities for the community to play in a diverse range of ways. Importantly, the community reiterated that these opportunities to play should leverage the features of the natural landscape.



What people said

The community wish to utilise the park in a way that promotes wellbeing and quality of life for local residents and visitors, but remains true to their values of environmental protection and celebration.

1. A place to play

The new Appin park as a place for play, activity and discovery is a vision that was shared by 48% of survey participants. When asked to select a vision for the new park, the top two responses were those of an Appin Park that encouraged attendees to play and get active:

A place for adventure and discovery through the natural landscapes- 26%

A fun place with lots of different activities and play equipment – 22%

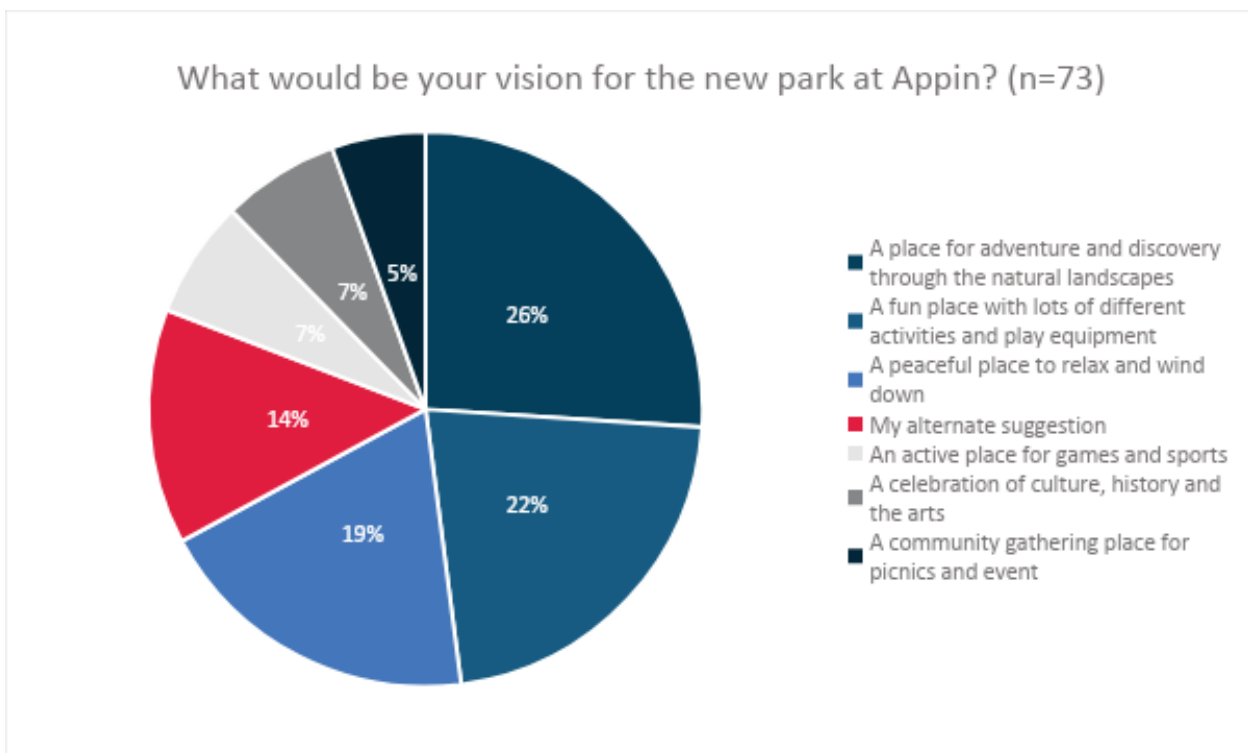


Figure 1: Community Engagement Online Survey – Community Vision

Details on how the community wished to play and be active were further detailed in additional survey questions, and Social Pinpoint pins.

2. Getting active

Walking trails and cycling paths were considered a regional need that could be suitably addressed in the new park at Appin. When asked what was missing from the Appin-Wollondilly area, Walking/ hiking trails was the most common response (a view shared by 50% of participants), and cycling routes the fourth most common response (33%). Both of these features were considered to be suitable for the space as they enabled the community to be amongst the landscape in a way that was unintuitive and congruent with the fundamental value of environmental conservation. In addition to this, a number of Social Pinpoint participants acknowledged the additional features/ services that could be provided alongside

walking trails; including educational opportunities, art and cultural installations, and food and beverage.

It should be noted that of the 24 participants who nominated cycling paths and trails as an important element for the new park, 83% were between the ages of 26-45, and additional comments often highlighted this feature for the purposes of exercise, such as the following Social Pinpoint comment “6 meter wide 1-2km criterium/ cycling/ walking circuit. This could be used by the local school for X-Country carnivals, by local cycling and triathlon clubs for competition. For anyone who wishes to ride their bike for exercise and doesn't wish to ride on the road”

3. Play spaces

The need for a high quality, inclusive play space in the region was a common theme identified during the engagement. Over 25% of all survey participants identified *Play spaces* and *Activities for Kids* as something that is missing from the Appin-Wollondilly area, and the inclusion of a play space was considered the seventh most important element to creating a great park in Appin. While 87% of all participants who voted play spaces as important were those aged between 26-45 (and likely to have an association with raising a family in the area), participants across all age groups heralded the importance of preserving bushland for its ability to create a space for children to play outdoors.

The vision of a park that facilitates play and discovery is one that was most strongly supported by younger survey participants, 75% of all participants aged between 18 and 25 nominated a vision that includes play and activity as the primary focus, a trend shared by 68% of survey participants aged 26-35. This concentration of responses emphasises the need for play spaces that was identified during the Social Pinpoint, in comments such as ““The kids' parks on offer in Appin are outdated or extremely poorly designed” and “Need more activities aimed at families with younger children. Appin Valley Park is not child friendly until about 3 years old”.

4. Water play

The need for an element of water within the park was most commonly recommended for its ability to provide an avenue for play and discovery. The ability to interact with water was the second most commonly identified missing element from the Appin-Wollondilly area, nominated by 48% of survey participants. The specific request for waterplay was one of the most common recommended features from Social Pinpoint participants, where five separate pins expressing a similar sentiment to the following “We are lacking water play facilities and a great playground with play equipment for the kids.”

Challenges

- The largest challenge in realising these community aspirations is balancing the provision of an active and social space without disrupting local wildlife. While people want to see uses that support the health and wellbeing of the community, they are also wary of the potential impact this could have on native wildlife, particularly the koala's that inhabit the area. This is a pressure point that needs to be taken into consideration for the park design.

- Many comments relating to play and discovery praised these function's ability to provide an escape from the fast paced urban lifestyle and creating a sense of exploration "amongst the wilderness". Given the limited boundaries of the park, and the proximity to the roadway, the challenge will be to create a sense of wonder and exploration that feels disconnected from the built environment.

Opportunities and design ideas

- Establishing a park that promotes wellbeing through interaction with nature
- Create play spaces that leverage the natural environment and promote inter-generational play
 - Consideration for the inclusion of a nature play space that is sympathetic to the natural landscape, and in a space that is not disruptive to local wildlife
 - Utilising the element of water to create opportunities for play, that also cools the region
 - Playground facilities considerations:
 - Water play
 - Swings
 - Flying fox
 - Climbing apparatuses
 - Playground's proximity to roadway
- Leverage the landscape to encourage creativity and exploration in a safe way
- The inclusion of extensive walking trails and cycle paths with consideration for linkages to the wider trails/ paths network in the region
- Wayfinding for cyclists and walkers
- Investigate opportunities for children to safely explore the natural bushland

Priority 3 – Creating Access to Open Space

“I need to travel out of the area to go to a good park...having great facilities will allow for people outside the area to visit and in-turn support our local businesses” – Survey participant

The community engagement highlighted the need for high quality open spaces in the Appin-Wollondilly area. Despite the landscape being an important part of the local identity, and the value that is placed on enhancing it, the community recognise the need for more high quality open spaces that enable them opportunities to engage with the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, the community envisage the new park at Appin as only a small part in a wider network of open space, and recreational opportunities in the area.



What people said

Despite the abundance of open space in the LGA, the community recognise the need for greater provision of open space, and increased opportunities to connect with the landscape in a safe, and practical way.

1. Responding to a Regional Need

When asked to consider what was missing from the local area, the top three responses all related to the ability to access and connect to the natural assets of the region. “Walking trails and tracks” was the most common response, selected by over half of all survey participants, closely followed by access to “Water features” (selected by 49% of participants), and “Natural areas and parks” (40%).

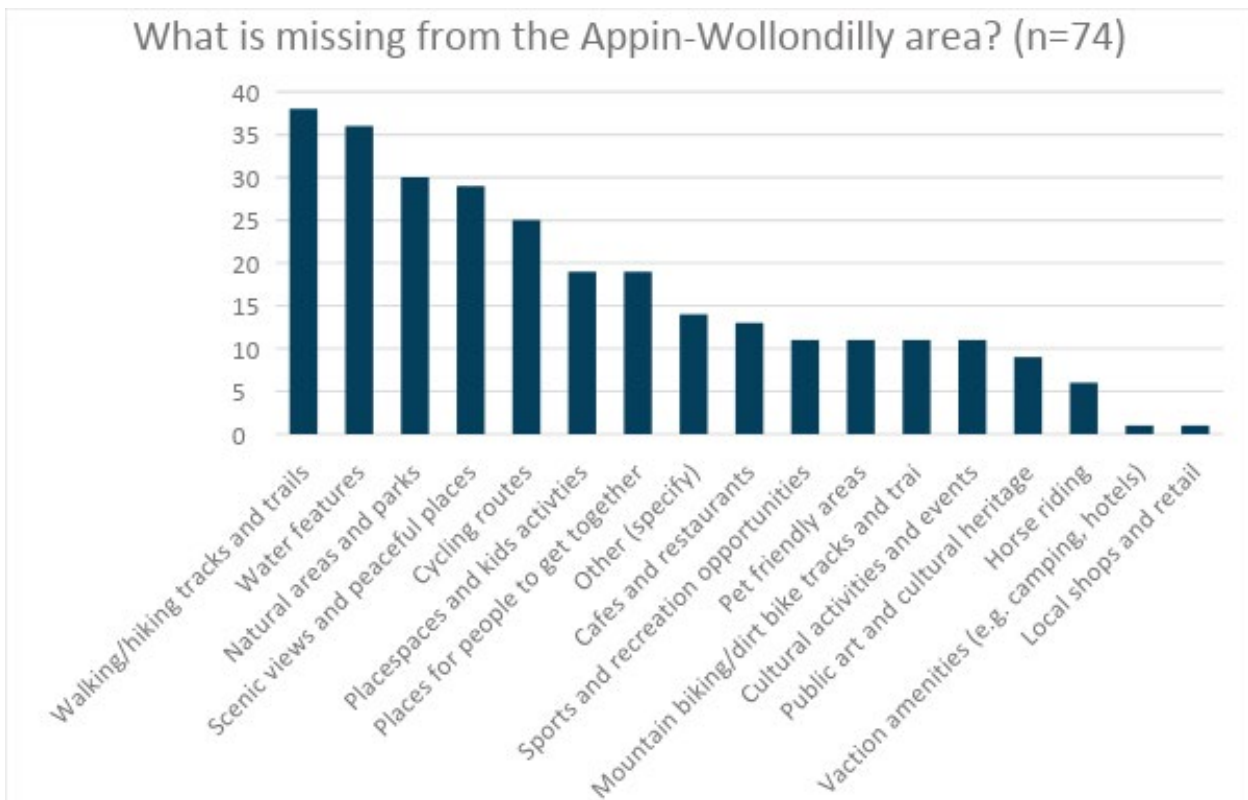


Figure 2: Community Engagement Online Survey; What is missing from the Appin-Wollondilly area?

2. Access to Water

The need for access to bodies of water or water features in the new park was a specific recommendation captured throughout the engagement. Social Pinpoint participants, in particular, considered the park to be directly linked to the George’s River, and a common suggestion was for the concept designs to create greater access to this and the neighbouring watering hole:

“This site should be used as a gateway to the George’s river koala park and needs to include all the land along the George’s river banks, through to Lysaught Road and connect up with the Dharawal National Park as well as the cataract scout park.

There is a perfect opportunity to create a national park and include all the way South to Appin Falls which is currently has the public locked out”

Considering the river and water as an essential element of the park was a sentiment shared by survey participants; when asked to nominate a single Big idea for the new park at Appin, the inclusion of water or the incorporation of the neighbouring bodies of water was the fourth most common recommendation, which a viewing platform or boardwalk being the most common specific recommendations.

3. A network of open space

Social Pinpoint participants highlighted the opportunities for the new park to be an entry point to a wider network of open spaces across the region. Referred to as a “gateway”, the community value the location of the site and potential linkages to culturally and environmentally important areas in the surrounds of Appin. Creating linkages to the Georges River and surrounding national parks through walkways, and trails was a common suggestion across the engagement activity, and pins associated to this idea received particular engagement.

Challenges

- The ability to respond to the need for greater access to open spaces, whilst aligning with the community’s value of environmental conservation is the core challenge to delivering on this, and numerous other, priority areas.
- The community acknowledges that increased access means increased disruption for the local wildlife and the potential for exacerbated litter. In particular, Mahoney Hole, was considered a sensitive ecosystem that would require additional cleaning and pollution mitigation measures.

Opportunities and design ideas

- Leverage visual qualities of the river and create access to or inclusion of the bodies of water on the borders of the site
- Enhance connectivity through Appin and to surrounding national parks
- Promote active transport through a wider network of cycleways and trails
 - Build a sense of journey for walkers/ cyclists utilising any trails or paths
 - Further investigate current 4x4 and trail bike activities on neighbouring sites, to minimise impact
- A significant hiking-trail network, that may be leveraged for environmental tourism
- Acknowledging the role of the park within the wider regional open space network
- Create a sense of connection to the landscape for park users

Priority 4 – Offering Relaxation and Respite

“We need a peaceful beautiful place for people to enjoy the natural beauty of Appin” – Survey participant

The Appin community recognised that the natural features of the site make it well suited to respond to the need for open spaces that offer respite from busy urban life and provide a suitable setting for simple relaxation. Furthermore, it was reiterated that a park dedicated to such space is an identity that is congruent with protecting the koala corridor and the landscape.



What people said

High quality open space is of increasing importance in recent times, and the immediacy of this need was evident in the engagement findings, wherein the community expressed a clear vision for a park in Appin that facilitates relaxation and respite, and boost community wellbeing by providing opportunities to come together in the space.

1. Providing Respite

The Appin-Wollondilly community identified the need for access to more open spaces that provide respite from urban life, and harness the therapeutic qualities of the landscape. When asked to consider what was missing from the area, 39% of survey participants nominated “Scenic views and peaceful places”, the fourth most common response, with additional ideas ranging from active relaxation such as “places where I can meditate and engage in gentle exercise” to a more passive respite approach such as “natural open parkland that encourages natural fauna and flora, whilst also providing a quiet peaceful escape”.

Considering the identified need, it is not surprising to note that 19% of survey participants selected “A peaceful place to relax and wind down” as their vision for the park, and 28% considered it one of the three most important features to be included in the new open space. In particular, this vision received almost three times the votes from females as it did males, and was the chosen vision for 50% of survey participants over the age of 65.

2. A place to come together

In light of the importance placed upon human interaction during the current Covid-19 pandemic, the need for picnic spaces and opportunities to come together with family and friends is an essential consideration for the new park, and its ability to build a more resilient community. “Places or people to come together” was something that 25% of survey participants acknowledged as being missing from the Appin-Wollondilly area. This identified need may also be a driving force behind 32% of survey respondents selecting “picnic spaces and seating” as a top three most important inclusion for the new park.

Challenges

- A number of engagement participants acknowledged the existing motorbike riding and four-wheel driving on the site, or nearby, as a major barrier to creating a peaceful, safe place for visitors to the park. Furthermore, reducing the impacts of the neighbouring roadway will present a similar challenge.
- Similar to previously nominated priorities, the community wish to see the natural landscape leveraged to create a sense of tranquillity and spaces for relaxation – rather than the intrusive inclusion of built spaces that aim to achieve this outcome.

Opportunities and design ideas

- Creating an easily accessible park that provides a sense of escape from urban life
- Acknowledging the natural assets within the site that could be utilised to create a sense of relaxation for park users
- Creating spaces that encourage the coming together of family and friends, but also the chance encounter of community members who have a shared interest.
- Identify spaces where the natural landscape and/ or topography creates a sense of calm, or opportunities where simply intervention can leverage the natural assets.
- Utilising change in landscaping or elevation to create natural sound barriers
- Identify key sightlines and views from within the park, that may be framed and accentuated in the concept design phase.

Where to from here

The first round of community engagement uncovered an overwhelming level of community support for the new park in Appin project. Furthermore, the unified community values and priorities paint a clear vision for a new park in Appin that celebrates and leverages the natural beauty of the landscape, to create opportunities that enable the community to connect with the land in a diverse range of ways.

These engagement findings, along with the on-going site analysis, environmental reports and finds of the other project consultants will provide a firm foundation for the development of a 50% Concept Design

Next steps

- The findings from this report will be used to inform the 50% Concept Design, to be developed by lead design consultant, Moir Landscape Architecture
- The 50% Concept Design will be the basis for a second round of community engagement that will take place via a survey and virtual workshop, and aim to capture community feedback on how the plan responds to community needs and values

Appendix A

Survey data analysis

To assist with overall readability, cross tabulation, and input to the main engagement report, the data analysis does not follow the chronology of the survey design (numbering of questions as they appeared in the survey).

A total of 74 people participated in the survey.

Demographics

What is your connection to this area? (Q3)

A total number of 83 responses to this question were received (as people could select more than one answer)

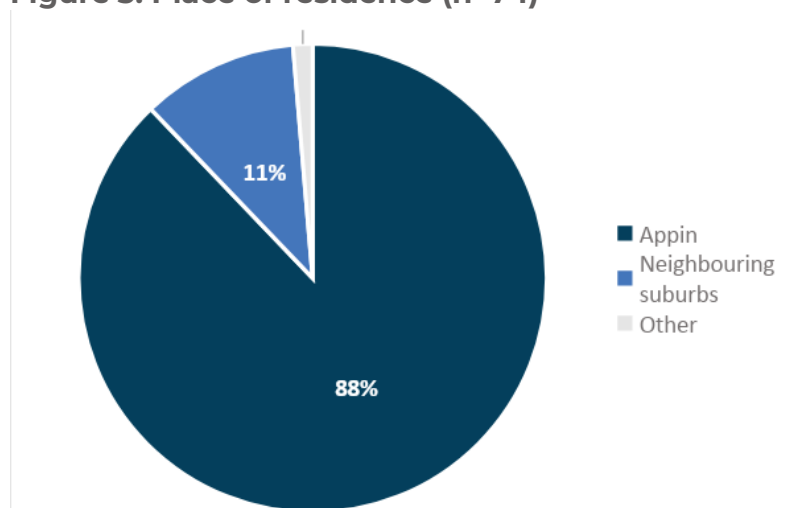
The majority (92% of 74 participants) identified as being local residents, and 11% of all responses also identified as local business owners. Only 4 people identified as being visitors to the area.

Where do you live? (insert suburb name or postcode) (Q19)

A total number of 74 responses to this question were received.

The vast majority of respondents (88%) live in Appin, followed by neighbouring suburbs at 11%, and other at 1%.

Figure 3: Place of residence (n=74)

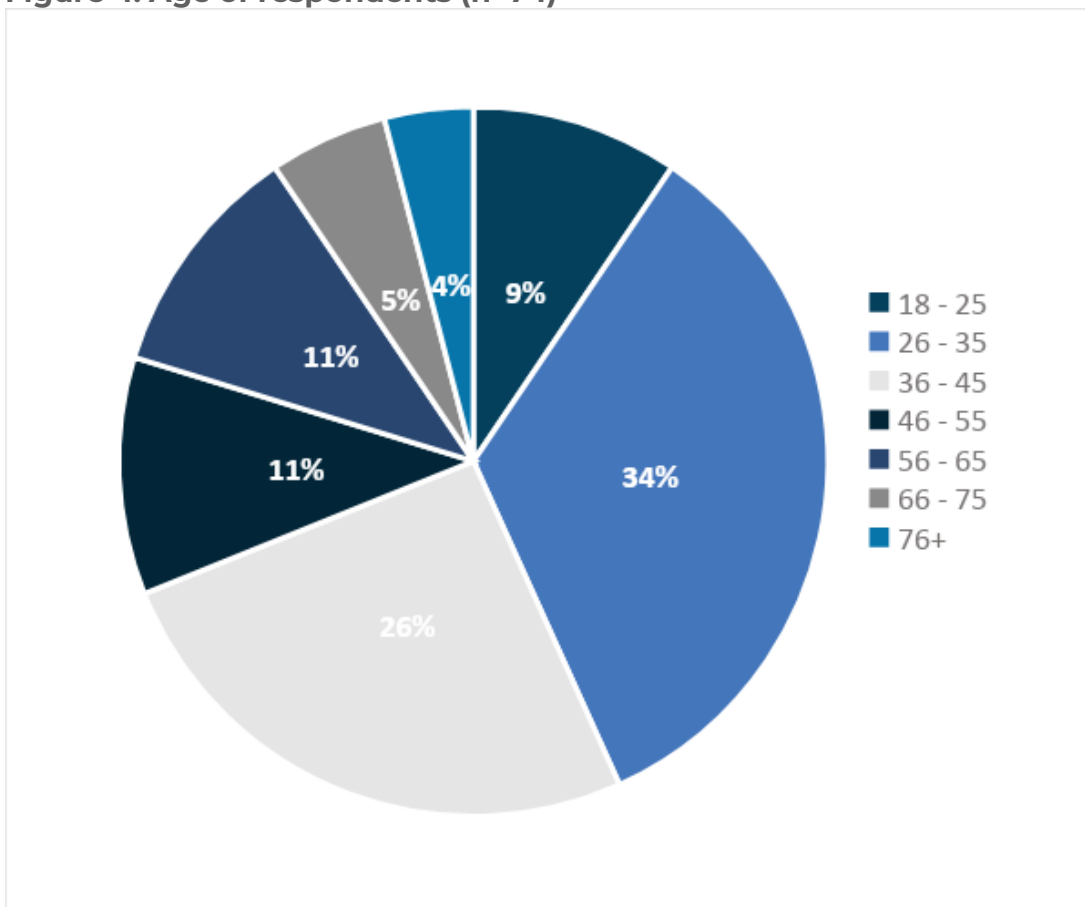


What is your age? (Q18)

A total number of 74 responses to this question were received.

There was fairly good representation of survey responses across the adult age categories, with the majority (60%) aged 26 to 45 years old, however with a notable expectation of no representation of under 18 year olds.

Figure 4: Age of respondents (n=74)

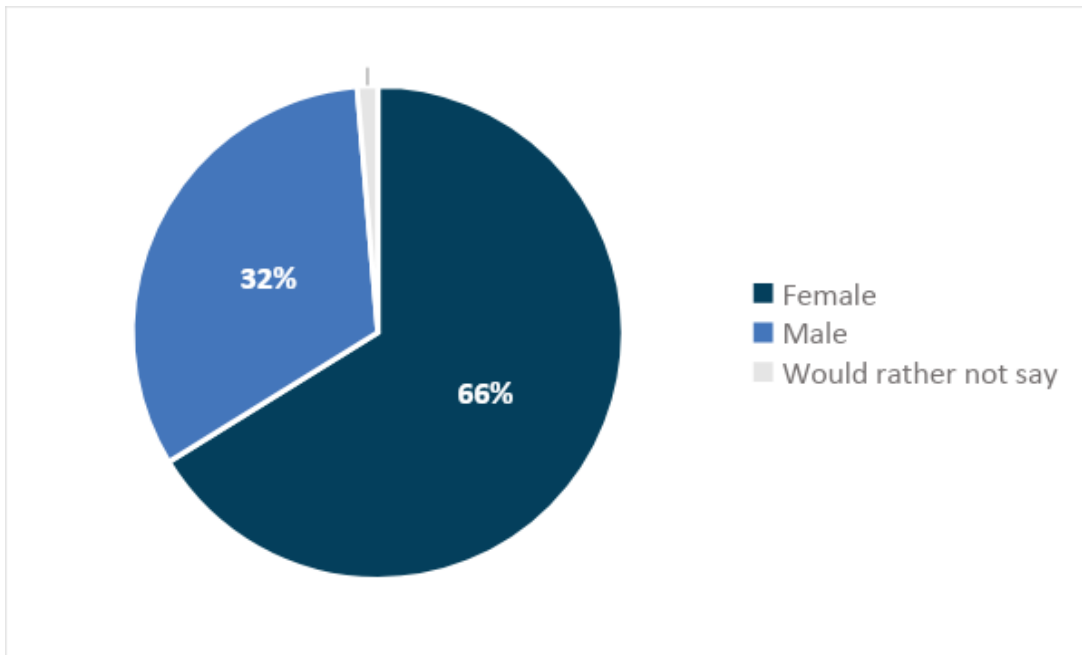


What gender do you identify with? (Q22)

A total number of 74 responses to this question were received.

The majority (49 people or 66%) of the 74 survey respondents were women.

Figure 5: Gender



What is your cultural background? (Q23)

A total number of 58 responses to this question were received.

Two responses identified as Irish and Polish with the remaining identifying as 'Australian'.

Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? (Q24)

A total number of 74 responses to this question were received.

4 participants identified as Aboriginal.

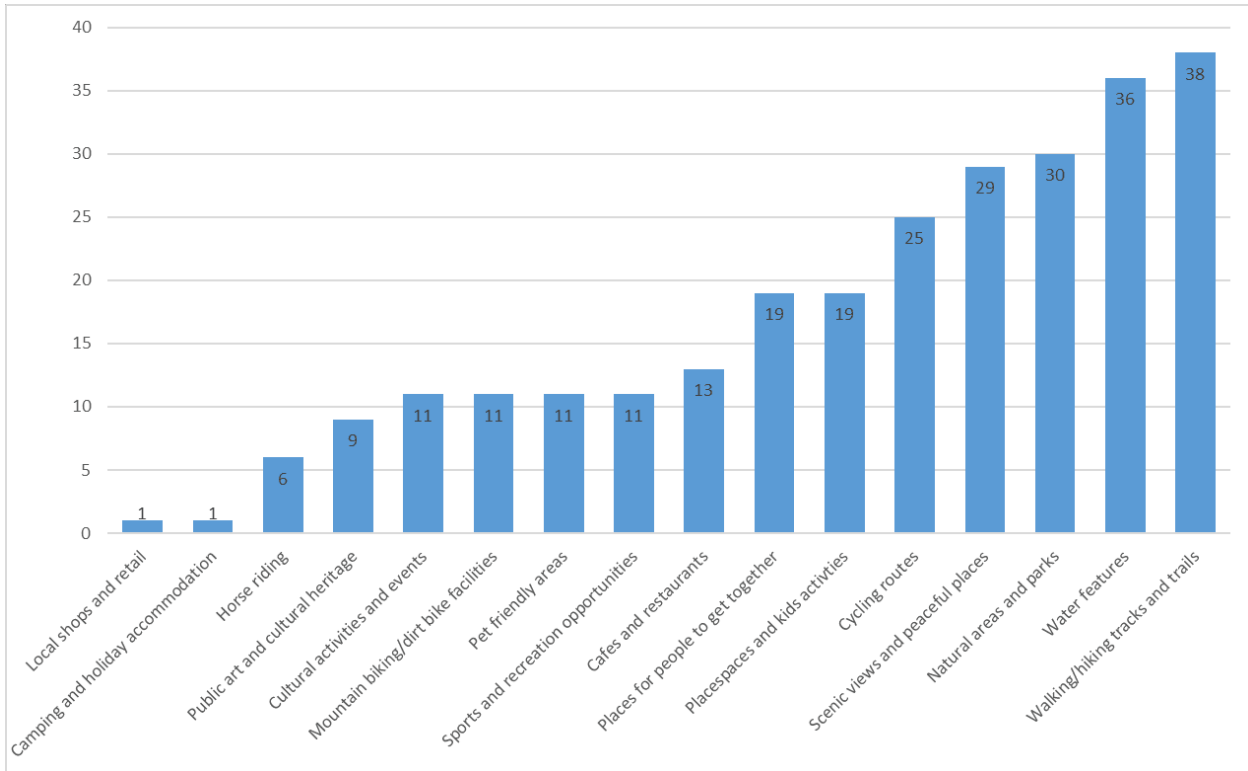
Aspirations for Appin?

Tell us your TOP 3 things that are missing from the area that would make it more attractive to live or visit? (Choose your top three) (Q7)

A total number of 284 responses were received to this question were received (as the survey did not limited the number of responses).

The top three selected responses were walking and hiking tracks, water features, and natural areas and parks.

Figure 4: Identified gaps



Please provide comment on why you chose your top three (Q8)

Only three responses were received to this open-ended question, quoted below. All three responses showed appreciation for the natural environment.

Quotes

- *"It would be nice to have a natural open parkland that encourages natural fauna and flora, whilst also providing a quiet peaceful escape without encouraging tourism."*
- *"This is a large area and the natural environment needs to be kept an enhanced. Allow people to enjoy the landscape and be part of it"*
- *"The beautiful area with a story to tell needs it heard. It is a place of significant Indigenous history, koala populations and beautiful scenery."*

What would be your overall vision for the new park? Keep in mind there will be something for everyone. (Q10)

A total number of 73 responses to this question were received.

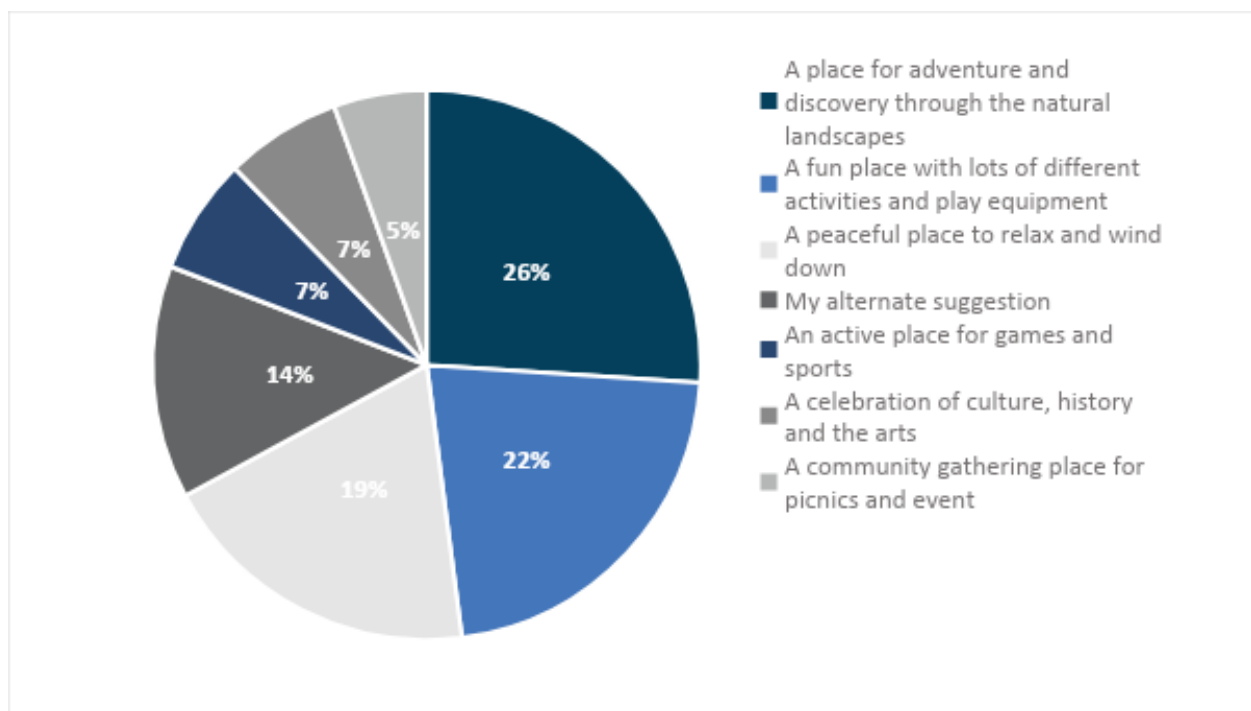
As indicated in Figure 5 below, the respondents aspire to a park that celebrates the natural environment, with 45% wanting to see a park that offers opportunities for exploring or just being in the natural landscape and a further 5 people (7%) wanting to see a celebration of the culture, history and the arts (with these nature based recreational activities indicated in blue hues in the pie chart).

22% envisaged the park as a fun place with lots of different activities and 5 people (7%) saw an opportunity for more games and sports - with these more active aspirations combining to 29%.

Only 4 responses (5%) envisaged the park to be a community gathering place for picnics and events.

14% (10 people) nominated an alternative vision statement for the park, with 8 of these participants envisaging a koala conservation area.

Figure 6: Vision



Quotes

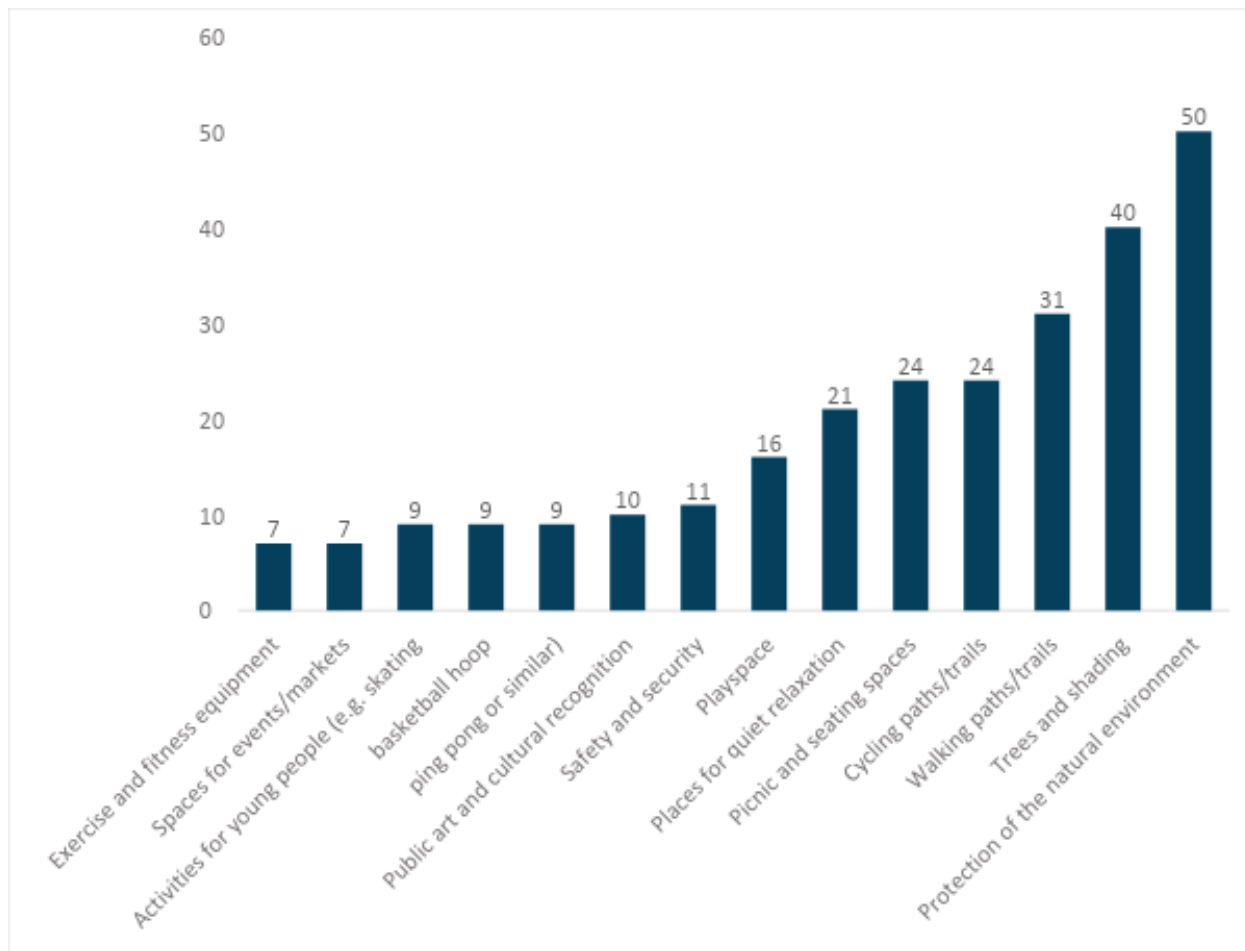
- *"Combination of Peaceful place with indigenous cultural recognition, exploration and protection of the natural environment, especially local koala populations"*
- *"Leave as a Koala park. Plant more koala friendly trees, make small bushwalking tracks. Make current residents the care takers/ tour guides. Locals can go on walks and koala sightings and report in a box"*
- *·"Education facility- like Macarthur Sustainability Centre."*

What are your top three most important elements to creating an amazing new park for the Appin - Wollondilly area community and visitors? (Q12)

A total number of 268 responses to this question were received (as the survey design did not limit answers to three top elements).

The protection and conservation of the natural environment received overwhelming support as the most important element of creating a great park - nominated by 68% of all participants.

Figure 7: Most important elements for the new park



Would you like to see public art in the park? Please tell us what themes or what other topics you would like to see. (Q13)

A total number of 74 responses to this question were received

45% of respondents wished to see public art in the park; 42% of those people wished to see indigenous culture as a theme for public art, and 36% recommended using the environment as inspiration for public art.

Quotes

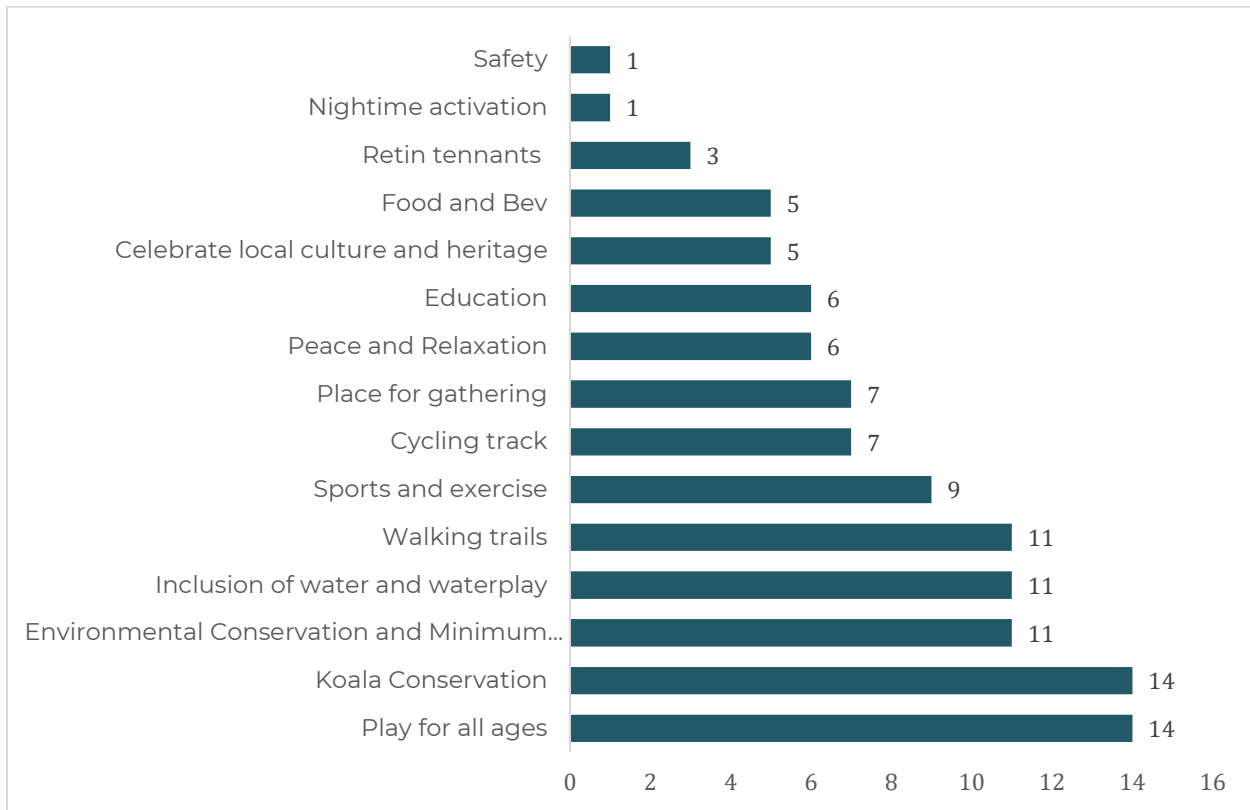
- "Yes, public art that shares Appin's unique history (e.g. Indigenous, European, mining, farming)."
- "Only art that draws attention to the local history and habitat."
- "Art that reflects the fauna and beauty of the area, also reflecting respect for the Aboriginal people of this land."

Think Big! What's your great idea for this new park? (Q14)

A total number of 73 responses to this open-ended question were received.

The most common theme amongst the big ideas was the desire for opportunities to play. Whether that be on formal play equipment, in water, or amongst the landscape, participants wished to emphasise that this was a place for play and discover. Common themes were to have nature play and minimum landscape intervention play spaces; and the need for play spaces that accommodate all ages.

Figure 8: Summary (themed) of big ideas for the new park



Quotes

- *"Nature play spaces for kids of all ages and abilities that utilises existing natural landscapes e.g. similar to Ian Potter's Children's Wild garden in Centennial Park Sydney or Lizard Log playground Western Sydney. Bike tracks and a community town farm or garden. Please increase tree canopy and extend the bush."*
- *"Keep it as natural as possible so it's an extension of the bush for wildlife. Walking tracks with small picnic areas that are well maintained and kept clean and tidy"*
- *"Natural play space that is open ended and safe for children of all ages, including babies. Plenty of grassed areas, shade, picnic tables and restrooms."*

What are your ideas for how we can support the Georges River Koala corridor? (Q15)

A total of 56 responses were received to this question.

Responses varied, however many responses indicated support for protecting the existing koala population and imposing minor, if any, intervention.

Quotes

- *"Leave as is, plant more koala friendly trees encouraging Koala population. Small walking tracks and sightings can be reported, educational points along the track with fun facts Maybe kids can stamp a track card or tick if they saw something in nature"*
- *"Listen to and implement the recommendations of environmental experts who want to not only preserve but grow the local koala population. Build a local koala rescue sanctuary which can also be educational, maybe in conjunction with existing places like Koala Park"*
- *"Donations can be made for the use of the area going towards conservation and preservation. Guided tours for school groups within the Macarthur area"*

Have you got any other comments or suggestions for the new park? (Q16)

A total of 43 responses were received to this question.

Responses were largely focussed on protecting the natural environment. Many responses also demonstrated a desire for local participation throughout the design and implementation of the park.

Quotes

- *"Keep this space as a bushland type of experience. No skate parks, stages, sports fields. This should be for the celebration of our natural environment"*
- *"Hire locals to look after the grounds. Include local riders in the design and construction of mountain bike trails/jumps etc"*
- *"Please keep the local community involved in all stages of the master planning for this new park."*

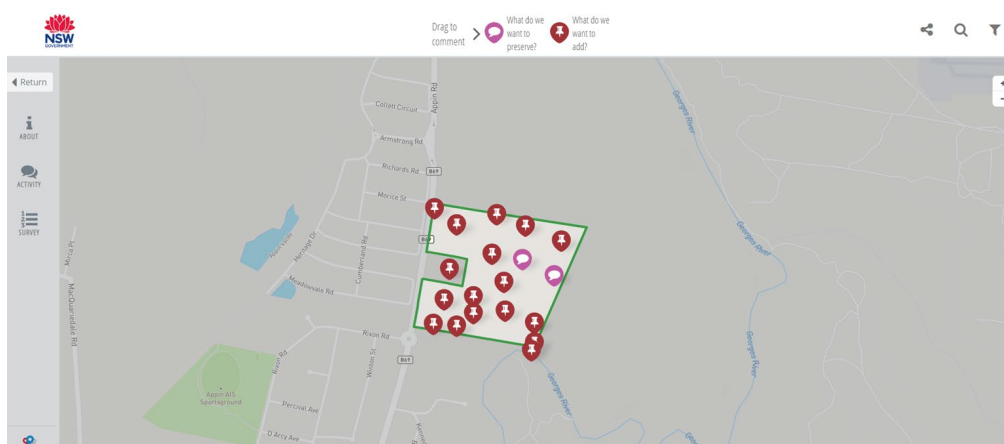
Appendix B

Social Pinpoint analysis

Overview

A total of 72 responses were recorded:

- 29.6% 'What do you want to preserve?' pins
- 70.4% 'What do you want to add?' pins

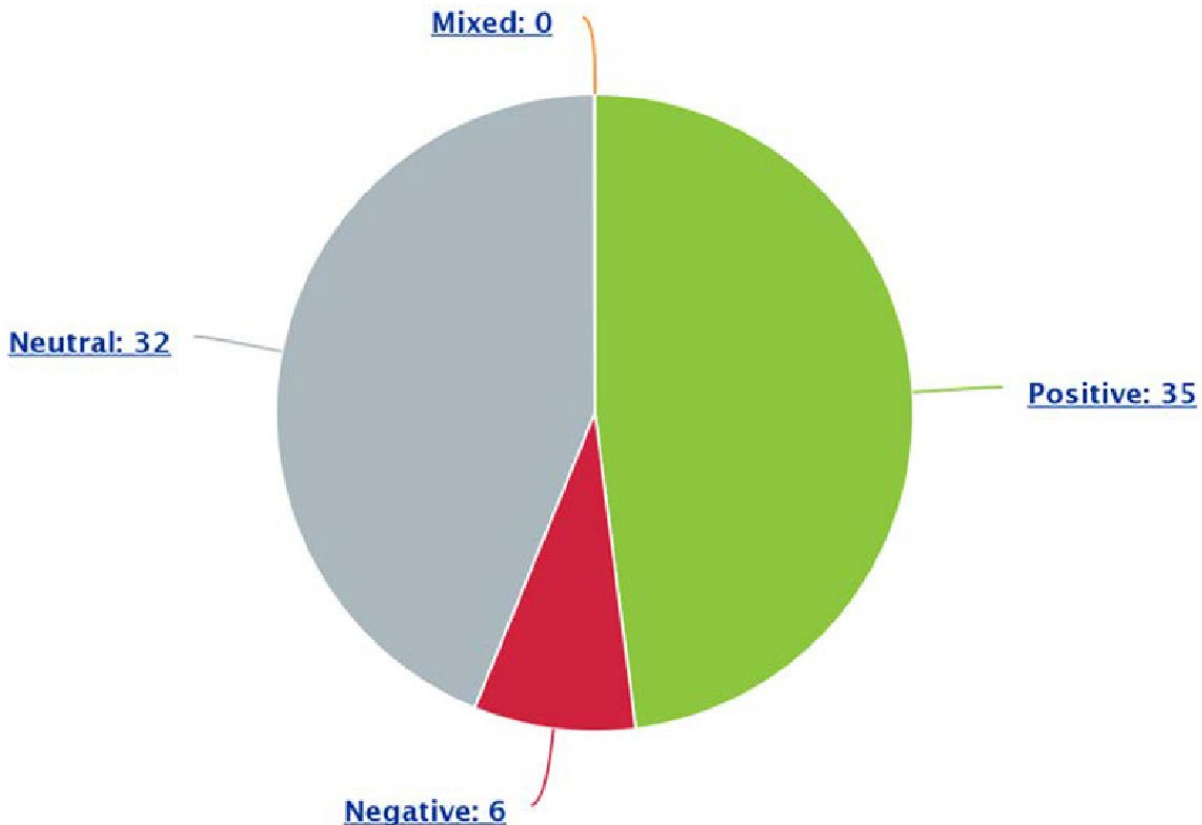


Heat map



Overall sentiment

A range of comments were recorded with a sentiment search producing the below chart. The negative comments were reviewed and noted concerns relating loss of trees and habitat as well as river access exacerbating littering. No 'negative' comments related to the project.



Community values

Maintaining rich native flora and fauna

Community appreciates the native vegetation and fauna, such as koalas, and wants to retain as many trees as possible in the area.

River accessibility & linkages to surrounds

Community values the location and potential linkages to culturally important areas in the surrounds of Appin - referred to as a "gateway". Georges River is also of significance, as the community wants to see access to the river from the park and a viewing platform overlooking the water.

Most popular comments

- A heritage centre to educate people on the rich natural and built heritage of this village. Appin is the 5th oldest village settled in Australia, with a rich indigenous heritage as well. Our local history (both Anglo and Indigenous

Australian) should be promoted. Perhaps a walk with interactive "did you know" postings could be included with a bike track (22 up votes)

- Would love to see a walking /running/ bike track. Many people love walking through the fire trails over the weekends but unfortunately people on trail bikes and 4WDs take over (16 up votes, 1 down vote)
- Suitable parking with entry only from the south bound lane and vehicles can only exit turning south. drivers wishing to enter or exit in opposing directions can use the roundabouts at Armstrong Road and Rixon Road. Last thing the town needs is more interruptions on the roads (15 up votes)
- Try to keep as many of the trees as possible in order to keep as much habitat for local koalas as possible (12 up votes)
- A Koala Trail, featuring locally designed/made sculptures of koalas. Local organisations could be involved, e.g.: Men's Shed, School, preschools, local artists etc. A printed 'Trail' could be distributed at the information centre. This would be a great interactive activity for families. It would, possibly, attract people from outside the area. Information could be included adjacent to the sculptures relating to the protection of koalas. This has been accomplished successfully elsewhere (12 up votes, 1 down vote)

Community aspirations

The word cloud below provides a snapshot of most common words used by respondents to describe their aspirations and ideas for the area.



The ideas shared have been grouped into the following themes:

Walking & bike trails that link into the surrounds

- Walking/ running/ bike track to support physical activity and wellbeing, both for leisure and X-Country carnivals.

- Extend trails beyond Appin Park, linking to the mountain bike tracks behind Appin.

Tree preservation

- Retain natural vegetation to 'save the koalas'.
- Cultural & heritage facilities for education & social cohesion
- Support for education of local heritage, such as a heritage or information centre that integrates with a bike track.
- A Koala Trail featuring locally designed sculptures of koalas, with accompanying educational pieces or signage.
- A (potentially native-only) community garden to enhance community interaction and foster experience sharing.

Play areas

- Family outdoor areas and playground facilities with interactive activities, including water play, flying fox and climbing apparatuses.

Water access

- Access to Georges River with viewing platform overlooking river.

Quotes

•“A koala trail, featuring locally designed/made sculptures of koalas. Local organisations could be involved, e.g.: Men’s Shed, School, preschools, local artists etc. A printed ‘Trail’ could be distributed at the information centre. This would be a great interactive activity for families. It would, possibly, attract people from outside the area. Information could be included adjacent to the sculptures relating to the protection of koalas. This has been accomplished successfully elsewhere.”

•“Family outdoor areas e.g. Walking paths, water fun, picnic areas, signage of local flora and fauna, kids play equipment, park map.”

•“Preserve as many trees as physically possible and add a walking/ bike track throughout and a koala hospital with maybe a small cafe attached. Koala sculptures in the trees and a viewing platform of the river. Keep majority untouched.”

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