



Parks for People
Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes Report
George Kendall Riverside Park, Ermington

April 2021

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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 of Country

This document acknowledges that Ermington 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.

Executive summary

The New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has commissioned JOC Consulting to assist with the delivery of community engagement for the upgrade of George Kendall Riverside Park in Ermington (the Park) as part of the Parks for People Program.

The community's input during the first phase of engagement (October/November 2020) helped to shape a vision for the future park and guided some of Australia's best designers and landscape architects to create a draft Concept Design that responds to the unique aspirations of the area.

This Engagement Outcomes Report presents the results from the second phase of consultation that sought community feedback on the draft Concept Design (refer below). The consultation took place between 8 March 2021 and 29 March 2021 and captured the feedback from over 178 community members.

Figure 1: Draft Concept Design presented to the community during Phase 2 community engagement



“Sometimes people just want a place to escape and not necessarily do anything but just be.”

- Online survey participant

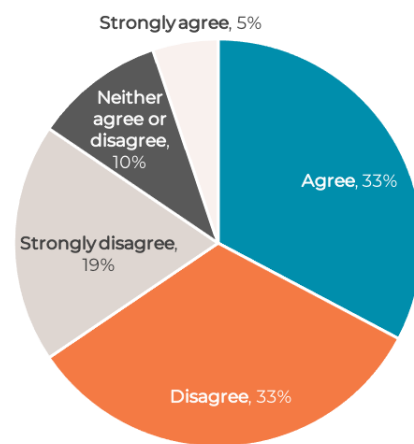
Considerations for finalising the Concept Design

While participants appeared divided when rating the Concept Design (refer to pie chart graph below), the majority of comments associated with these participants that disagreed or strongly disagreed related to the proposed looped entry and skate park. Participants more broadly appreciated the natural feel of the Park and valued the range of inclusive amenities proposed in the draft Concept Design. Overall, participants considered the Park to be a valuable, natural asset for the local community.

The following table highlights key design elements that participants agreed and disagreed on in relation to the Concept Design:

participants did note that the engagement materials did not necessarily address how the Park upgrades have responded to previous community feedback. This was primarily linked to the proposed skate park and looped entry due to safety and anti-social concerns, in addition to the absence of water play in the draft Concept Design..

Looking at the draft Concept Design for the upgrades to George Kendall Riverside Park, do you think we're on the right track? (n=58)



Participants agree the Concept Design is on the right track by:	Participants disagree the Concept Design is on the right track by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintained natural feel of the Park ▪ Water trails and wetlands ▪ Boardwalk and viewing opportunities ▪ Improved dog park ▪ Inclusive play elements ▪ Seating opportunities for rest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Location and provision of the Skate Park ▪ Safety and traffic concerns related to the looped entry ▪ Water play (currently not included in the Concept Design)

What we heard in Phase 1

The first phase of engagement was held entirely online in October and November 2020, capturing feedback through an online survey, an interactive Social Pinpoint map and social media.

Online COVID-safe engagement hub

239

community members

Ranging from 18 to 75+ years of age

48% female, 51% male

63% living within 10 minutes' walk of the site

151

Interactive map participants

88

Online survey responses

The key main priorities for the community were:



A fun place for diverse recreational interests, ages and abilities



A welcoming and accessible space for the whole family



A cool space that celebrates the natural landscape as a place for relaxation and respite

Some of the community's big ideas included:

- Create play spaces (including water play and multi courts) that promote social interactions for all ages and abilities
- Increase visibility of Indigenous local history through native vegetation and educational pieces
- Encourage exploration and share stories through creative wayfinding
- Improve shading options in the park, particularly along walking and cycling paths
- Use natural materials where possible to complement and reflect the unique natural environment
- Provide better access to toilets

What we heard in Phase 2

Participants valued the range of both active and more relaxed design elements shown in the draft Concept Design. It was expressed through comments and feedback that providing an inclusive and comfortable park experience is essential for Ermington’s growing community. Importantly, the natural setting by the Parramatta River was seen to harmonise both active and passive uses, with additional ideas of nature play for getting active and seating on the viewing platform for resting.

Participants wished to see the Park enhanced by improving and expanding existing facilities, and introducing elements such as water play to mitigate urban heat. This priority for water play and nature play was a common thread between phase one and phase two engagement.

Figure 3: Word clouds based on common phrases on the Design Board (positive sentiment)



Figure 4: Word clouds based on common phrases on the Design Board (negative sentiment)



Aboriginal Consultation (see Appendix C)

As part of the development of the Concept Design, JOC Consulting and AECOM facilitated an online workshop with Dharug Traditional Owners and community representatives. The consultation revealed the integral role of the natural environment of the Park to the continuous culture and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. It was expressed that the mangroves and wetlands should be protected from overdevelopment and overuse. Overall, participants wished to see an inclusive Park which integrates Dharug language and artworks to convey culture as a living and continuous connection to the land through interaction and experience.

Online COVID-safe engagement hub

178+

community members participated

Ranging from 26 to 76+ years of age

79% female, 21% male

81% of carers care for a child

80% living within 10 minutes' walk of the site

938

visits

335

unique visits

119

Design Board participants

59

Online Survey responses

3

Written Submissions

“Water”

“People”

Popular words used in the Design Board (attached to positive sentiment)

Feedback on the design features

Phase two engagement participants were asked to provide further input on several key design features that we heard the community wanted to see during the phase 1 engagement. The following table outlines feedback that was captured for each of these design features on the Design Board, also integrating comments from the 'Concept Design' tile where appropriate.

Design feature	What did the community like?	Additional ideas from the community
<p>New park entries</p> <p>(Carefully designed signs and new plants will greet visitors and make it more enjoyable for everyone coming to the park)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community consultation of sign designs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designs align with, and support, the Park's aesthetic
<p>The boardwalk</p> <p>(A new boardwalk will make the most of the site's natural assets like the mangroves and Parramatta River)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe boardwalk for walkers only (rather than cyclists) The size of the viewing platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide comfortable seating on the viewing platform Increase mosquito spraying in this area year-round Integrate information boards to help park users learn about nature
<p>Water trails</p> <p>(Connect to nature and learn about water science through the creation of wetlands)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational experiences for community to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide areas for dog recreation, such as a dog watering hole Educational opportunities within a natural playground and information boards
<p>Places to relax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large trees and native plantings to provide cooling and shading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant mature trees to help cool while others grow More tree plantings

<p>(Peaceful areas within the park allow visitors to read a book or take in the natural surroundings and outlook)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a variety of seating areas across the Park to cater for all seasons (shade for summer and full sun for winter)
<p>Dog park</p> <p>(A new and exciting off-leash dog park will allow owners to relax and socialise while their dogs can play and get some exercise)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seating and shade provisions in the dog park for opportunities to rest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrade existing gate to be more secure. Ideas included a double entry gate ▪ Provide dog facilities, including doggy bags, bins and water stations, across the whole park ▪ Include dog obstacles for play
<p>New paths</p> <p>(Making it easier to get around, new pathways will open areas of the park for activities including cycling and walking)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Easily accessible paths for all ages within the natural surroundings ▪ Separating pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, especially along the southern edge of the Park ▪ Integrating signage to enhance wayfinding for parkruns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend the separated path to the east of Silverwater Bridge ▪ Paint kilometre markings on the pathway to help wayfinding ▪ Include a 'learn to ride' push track ▪ Reconsider the looped entry, due to safety concerns
<p>Adventure play</p> <p>(An extension to the existing playground will incorporate elements of nature, history and living culture and offer inclusive play)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating play equipment and activities for all ages, especially older age groups ▪ Providing shade over playground areas which consider sun angles throughout the day to ensure play equipment is comfortable to use ▪ Co-locating amenities such as toilets, bins and BBQ areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide water play as a relief from urban heat ▪ Separate the playground from the dog park

<p>Sports</p> <p>(Provision will be made for a space to allow for more sport and informal play)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing adequate lighting of fields and paths ▪ Expanding existing multipurpose courts. Ideas included providing an additional basketball or tennis area under shaded structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep the sports facilities 'low key' and instead focus on leisure and socialising for families adjacent to the river ▪ Include a gender neutral amenities building for sport players ▪ Reconsider the skate park due to a safety concerns and proximity of Meadowbank Skate Park ▪ Add cricket nets, including a practice cricket net
<p>The social space</p> <p>(An accessible and open space will be designed for both active and passive recreation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seating areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide innovative picnic shelter designs which cater to larger groups. Ideas included back-supportive seats and rounded tables. ▪ Create a natural style outdoor amphitheatre for events and performances

The following page provides a summary of additional design features mentioned by participants as currently missing from the Concept Design.

Summary of key gaps for consideration

Participants identified the following design gaps for the project team to consider when finalising the Concept Design:

1. Including water play: Over 26 responses across both platforms wanted to see water play included in the draft Concept Design. Participants considered the Park's context within Western Sydney as a rapidly growing area where urban heat becoming more extreme. It was also suggested that water play areas are shaded to provide enhanced cooling properties.

“A water playground is a must with the urban heat in summer and more people in the area. There is not enough access to water play activities in our area.”

2. Providing cricket facilities: Six participants raised the importance of providing additional, improved cricket facilities. In addition, one submission from Cricket NSW noted support of the Concept Plan's additional cricket field at the Park which will address current and future NDCA demand, especially in junior cricket participation. Suggested considerations for the final Concept Design have been summarised below:

- A minimum three to five-lane synthetic cricket practice facility
- A 'Regional/Premier' Tier 3 or 4 facility
- A dual turf-synthetic pitch arrangement
- Junior format crease markings/identifiers within the playing pitch and training net design

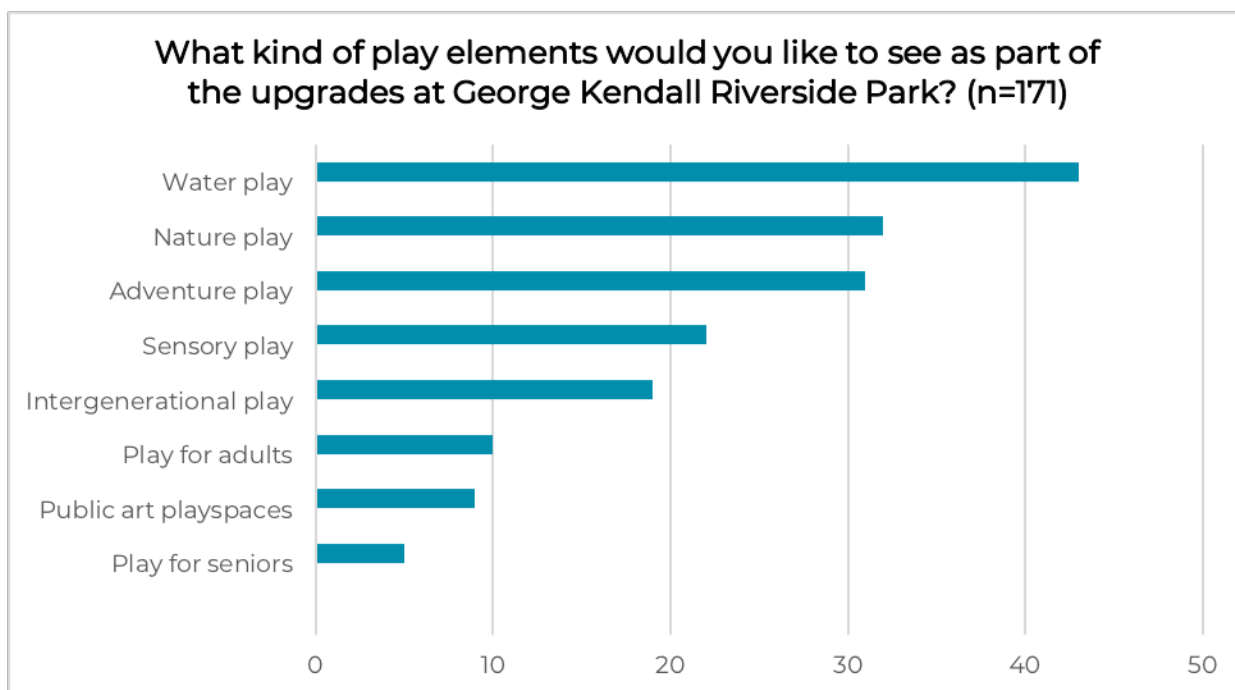
“Great to see two fields at this site since it is really hard to get new fields in Parramatta. I hope it will also have a cricket net. Could there also be practice cricket nets please.”

3. Creating a 'Learn to ride' push track: Four participants suggested the inclusion of a 'learn to ride' track for keen learners on wheels. In addition, one submission noted there to be very few spaces for people to learn and practice to ride a bike or scooter in the area, and deemed the Park suitable due to its abundant open space and proximity to the river cycleway.

“There should be safe track for the children to learn to ride and safely play.”

Feedback on elements of play

Participants were asked which types of play elements they would like to see in the new Park. *Water play*, *Nature play*, and *Adventure play* were the most popular preferences, receiving 43 votes, 32 votes and 31 votes respectively (a point of view that closely mirrors the original insights captured during the phase 1 engagement). *Sensory play* was also important to participants, receiving 22 votes, a priority which was echoed in image preferences for interactive, experience-based public art.



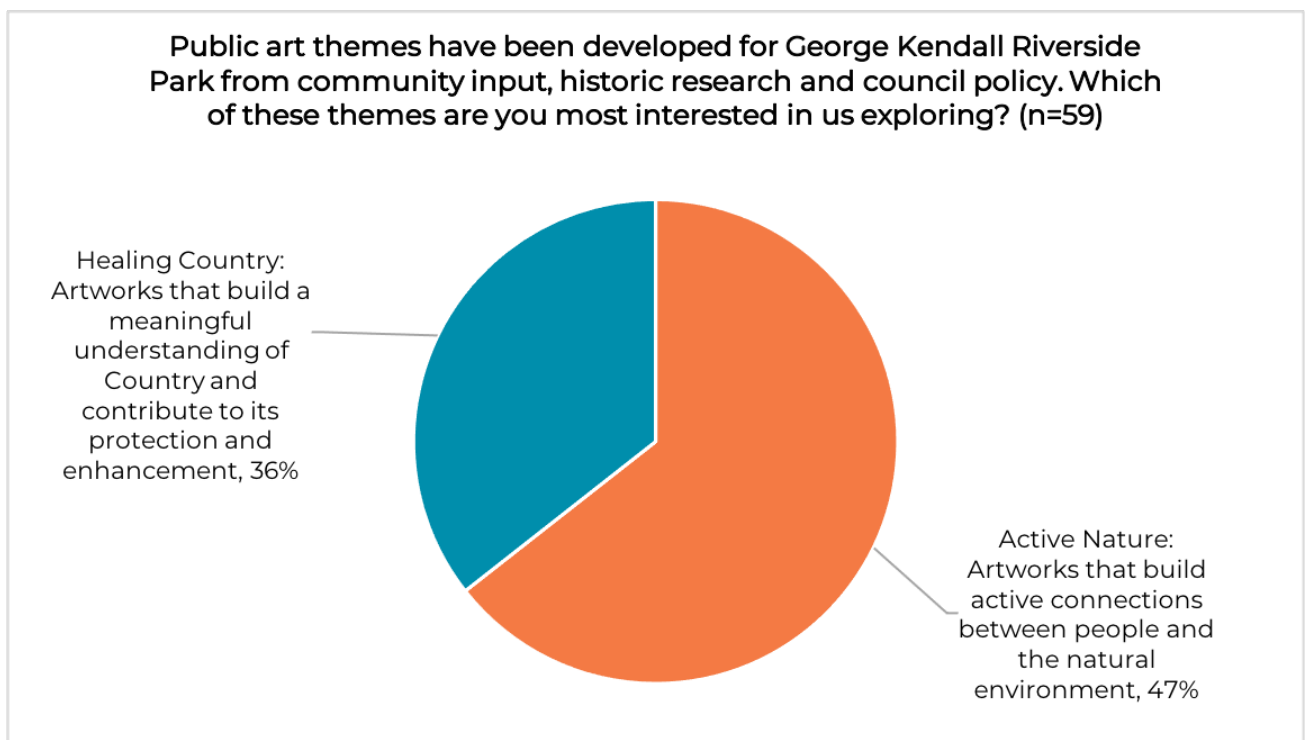
What we heard during the Phase 1 Community Engagement:

- The inclusion of water play was a top three priority for the community
- Participants wished to see the inclusion of facilities that encourage active lifestyles, including additional tracks for pedestrians, runners and cyclists
- The play space should be inclusive and encourage exploration and creativity

Feedback on public art

Participants were asked to indicate their preference between two public art themes which have been developed based on community inputs, historic research, and council policy. Preference for these themes was relatively even. In total, 38 participants nominated *'Active Nature: Artworks that build active connections between people and the natural environment'* and 21 participants nominated *'Healing Country: Artworks that build a meaningful understanding of Country and contribute to its protection and enhancement'* as a public art theme for the upgraded Park.

In an open response, one participant questioned whether both themes could be integrated into public art for the Park.



Participants were also asked to select which examples of public art best reflect the type of art they would like to see in the Park.



The most popular images (Image 1 - 46 votes and Image 6 – 22 votes) ranged in materials but both featured sculptural art which either represented or incorporated nature-inspired shapes. The top four nominated artworks (Image 1, Image 6, Image 3 and Image 4) were also all of a large, almost immersive scale. Artworks of a smaller scale which offered minimal interaction, such as Image 2 and Image 5, did not receive a particularly high number of votes.

Summary of key issues

Participants raised the following issues for the design team to consider when finalising the Concept Design:

Reconsidering the skate park: More than 46 participants did not welcome the prospect of a skate park at George Kendall Riverside Park. Most of these participants advocated for its removal in the final Concept Design, with few suggesting a relocation on the site further from away residences. Participants viewed the skate park as unnecessary considering the proximity of Meadowbank Skate Park, and noted the noise pollution and disturbance that this type of facility can produce. In place of the skate park, participants suggested a focus on rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing Park. Ideas included an additional tennis court of cricket practice facilities, or an intergenerational, natural style obstacle course.

“No skate park, the close one at Meadowbank has near constant police presence due to disturbances and harassment. As a local that is the last type of environment that the community and this peaceful park needs.”

Reconsidering the looped entry. Over 27 participants expressed concern about the looped road at the north of the site. Broadly, participants noted that this addition was unnecessary considering the high local patronage, and was generally not in character with the peaceful, natural qualities of the Park. Further, responses showed consideration for local residents, flagging that the looped road may become an invitation for anti-social activity and illegal dumping outside of daylight hours due to low visibility. One of these participants also considered the impact on wildlife as the road potentially could turn a peaceful area into a busy thoroughfare.

“The loop road will result in an increase in theft, illegal dumping, drugs, hooning, graffiti and anti-social behaviour by providing a concealed area with road access. This is the opposite of what a park should provide. Please, preserve the park as a parkland – not as a car park”

Separating the walking and cycling path: More than 16 participants wished to see the Park provide separate, wider paths for pedestrians and cyclists throughout. Participants raised safety concerns associated with the existing shared path, especially along the southern edge of the Park. This desire for separated paths was also reflected in comments about the boardwalk on the Design Board which suggested pedestrian-only access to the river.

“We need a separate cycle path along the southern edge of the park because the current one is too narrow and is dangerous for walkers with the speeding cyclists.”

Mitigating pests across the site: Six participants welcomed the idea of wetlands but also emphasised the importance of high maintenance at these sites. This is due to an existing issue of mosquitos at the Park, especially along the stretch of the Parramatta River. It was important to participants that measures to deter pests are adopted year-round, and not only linked to large events at the Park.

“Need more mosquito spraying, not only linked to large events at Olympic Park”

Remediating the site: Three participants expressed that the site should be remediated and monitored by ongoing management. It was suggested that new top soil is placed and that grass coverage is more even across the Park.

“This beautiful park needs a proper management plan that will keep people safe, not works that will disturb perhaps contaminated soils from its past usage.”

Case studies

Several participants referenced case studies for the design team to consider. These have been consolidated below:

- *Fairfield Adventure Park (inclusive nature play) – Fairfield, NSW*
- *Phillip Ruddock Park (water play) – Dundas Valley, NSW*
- *Bird Hide (small bird watching area) – Sydney Olympic Park, NSW*
- *John Wearne Reserve (separated dog park) – Carlingford, NSW*
- *Wentworth Point Park (lighting) – Wentworth Point, NSW*

Where to from here

The vision and draft Design Concept for the upgrades to George Kendall Riverside Park has been relatively well received by participants. Through the course of community engagement, valuable feedback on the draft Concept Design was captured, along with additional design ideas and elements for consideration as AECOM develop a final Concept Design.

Next steps

The findings from this report will be used to inform the final plan for upgrades to George Kendall Riverside Park. In 2021, an online information session will illustrate the key features of the plan and highlight how community input has helped shape the design.

“There are so many innovative ideas around the world for public play spaces - would love to see something different here, rather than the usual playgrounds.”

- Online Survey participant

Appendix A – Online Survey Analysis

Overview

A total of 59 people participated in the survey.

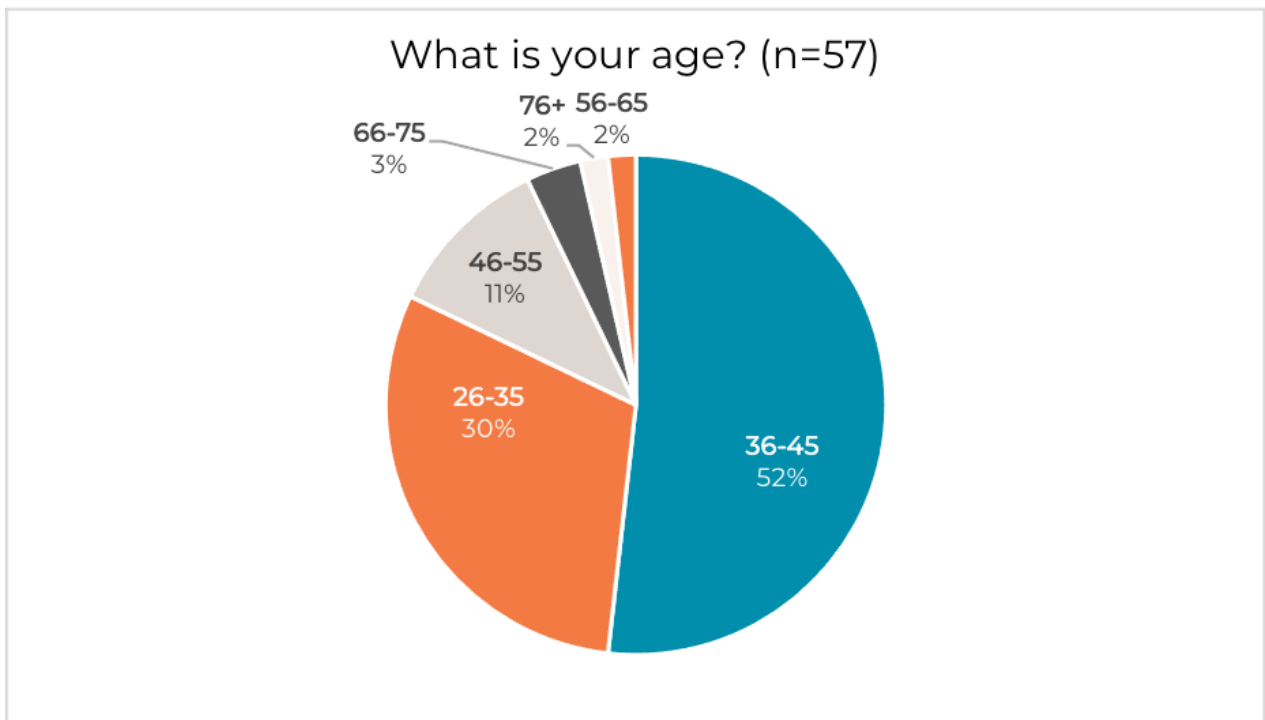
Demographics

What gender do you identify with? (Q12)

The majority (79%) of participants identified as female and 21% identified as male. One participant preferred to not answer this question.

What is your age? (Q9)

The largest age group among participants was 36-45 year olds (52%). This was followed by 30% of participants aged 26-35, and 11% aged 46-55. Few participants were aged 56-76+, and no participants were aged 25 or below.



Where do you live? (insert suburb name or postcode) (Q10)

The majority (64%) of participants live in Ermington (2115). 19% of participants live in neighbouring Rydalmere (2116), and 4% in Dundas/Dundas Valley (2117). Five participants (8%) also each live in the following areas.

- Carlingford/Carlingford Court (2118)
- Epping/North Epping (2121)
- Baulkham Hills/Bella Vista/Norwest (2153)
- Melrose Park (2114)
- North Parramatta/North Rocks (2151)

One participant did not answer this question.

Do you live within 10 minutes walk of the Park? (Q11)

80% of participants live within 10 minutes walk of the Park. Two participants did not answer this question.

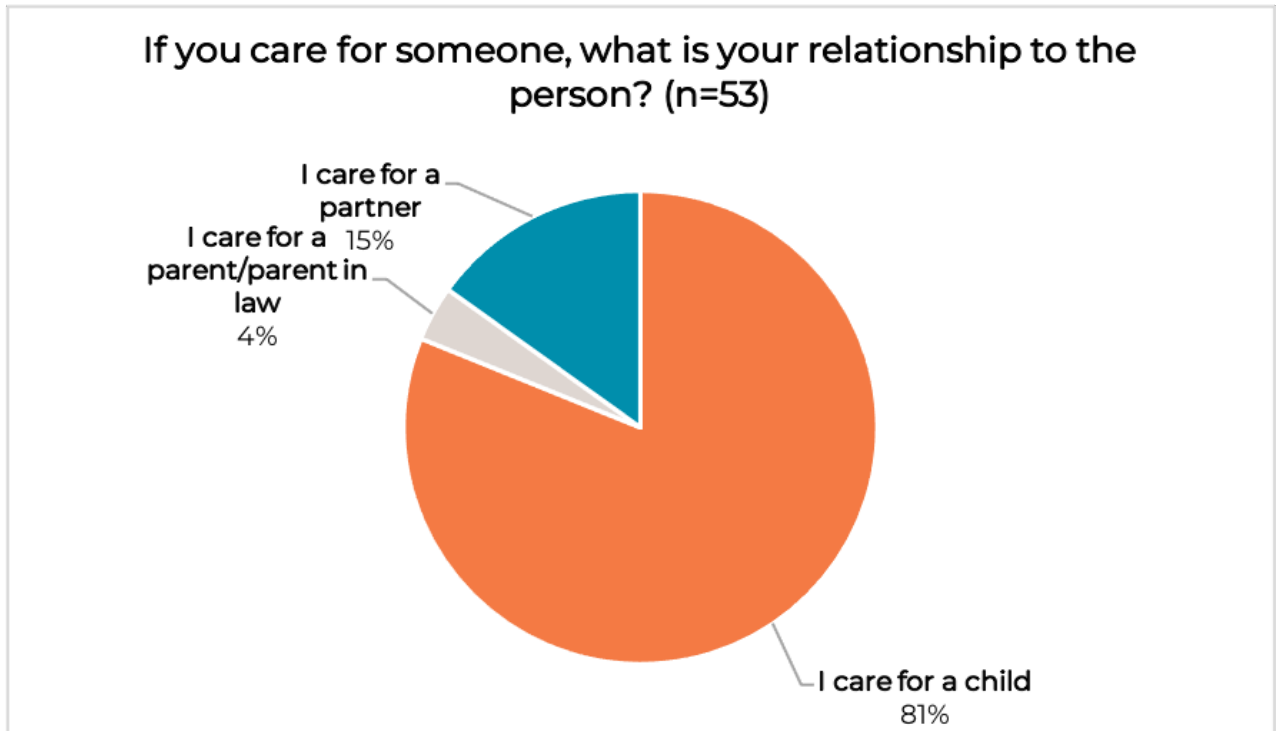
Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? (Q15)

No participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. One participant preferred not to answer this question.

If you care for someone, what is your relationship to the person? (Q16)

76% of participants care for someone. Out of these participants, 81% care for a child, 15% care for a partner and 4% care for a parent/parent in law.

The majority (73%) of all 59 participants cared for a child. One participant also cared for a child, parent/parent in law and a partner.



Do you speak a language other than English at home? Please specify (Q13 & Q14)

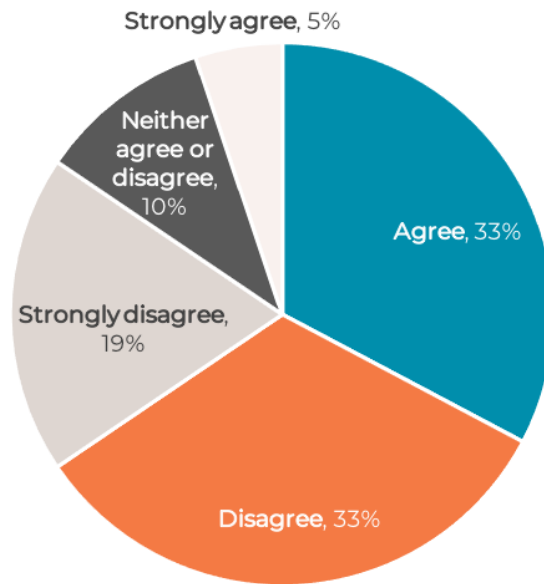
Eight participants (14%) spoke a language other than English at home. These languages included Singhalese, Polish, Greek, Chinese, Hindi and Italian.

Community aspirations

Looking at the draft Concept Design for the upgrades to George Kendall Riverside Park, do you think we're on the right track? (Q2)

22 participants (38%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Conversely, 30 participants (52%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Six participants were undecided.

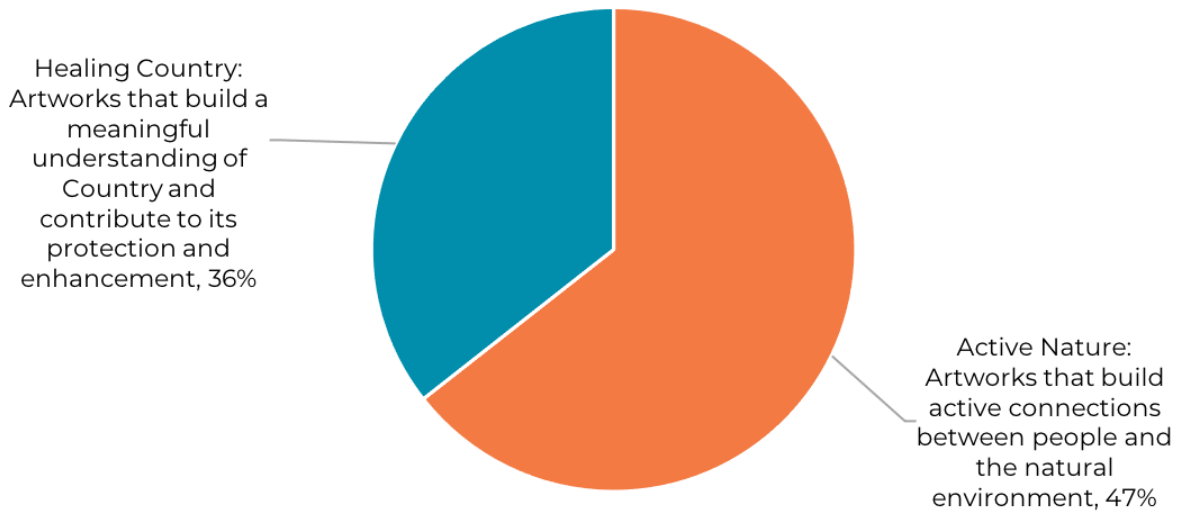
Looking at the draft Concept Design for the upgrades to George Kendall Riverside Park, do you think we're on the right track?
(n=58)



Public art themes have been developed for George Kendall Riverside Park from community input, historic research and council policy. Which of these themes are you most interested in us exploring? (Q4)

Participants demonstrated a preference for public art that explored an interplay between nature and activity. In total, 38 participants nominated 'Active Nature: Artworks that build active connections between people and the natural environment' and 21 participants nominated 'Healing Country: Artworks that build a meaningful understanding of Country and contribute to its protection and enhancement' as a public art theme for the upgraded Park.

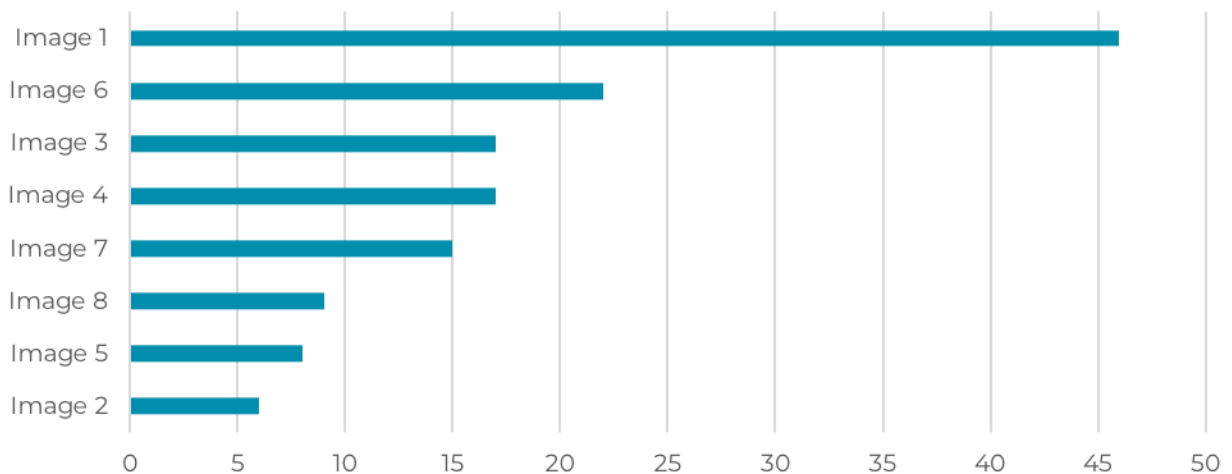
Public art themes have been developed for George Kendall Riverside Park from community input, historic research and council policy. Which of these themes are you most interested in us exploring? (n=59)



Public art comes in many different types, scales, and forms. Which of these examples reflect the type of art that excites you? (Select 3) (Q5)

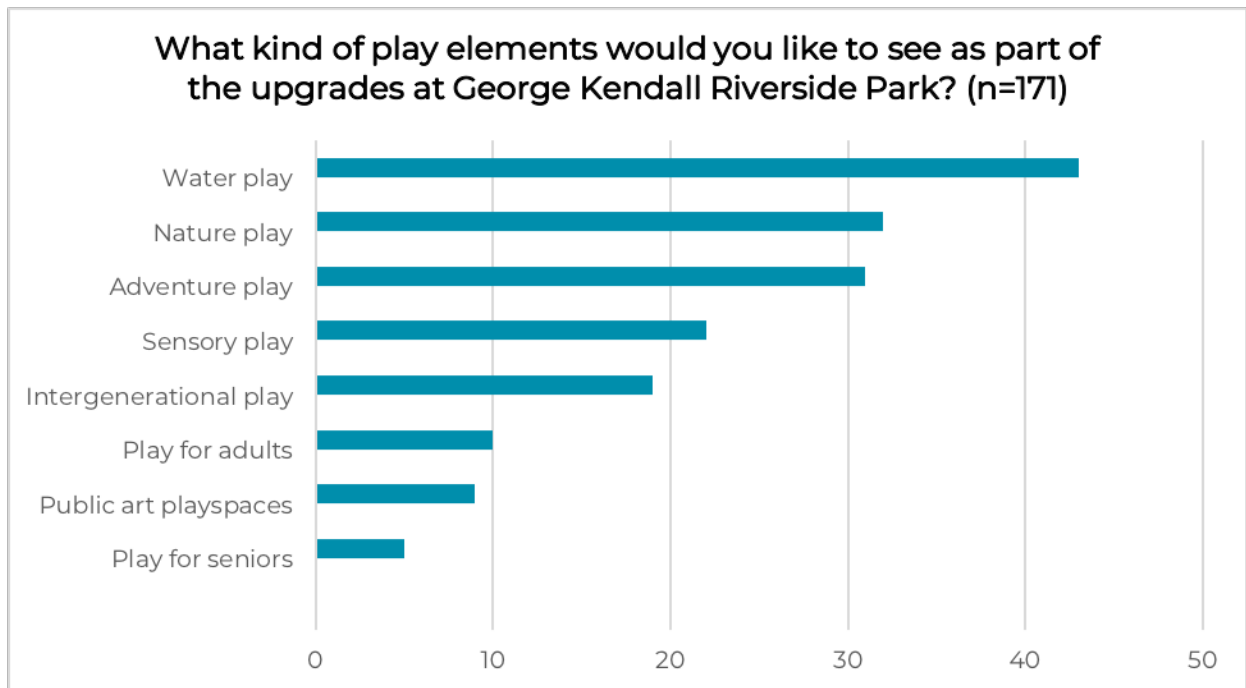
Image 1 was, by far, the most popular selection among participants, receiving 46 votes. This was followed Image 6 which received 22 votes. Images 8, 5 and 2 were the least popular images, receiving less than 10 votes each.

Public art comes in many different types, scales, and forms. Which of these examples reflect the type of art that excites you? (Select 3)(n=140)



What kind of play elements would you like to see as part of the upgrades at George Kendall Riverside Park? (Q7)

The majority of participants nominated *Water play*, *Nature play* and *Adventure play* as priority play elements for the Park. While *Intergenerational play* was also quite popular, more specific considerations such as *Play for adults* and *Play for seniors* were not as commonly selected.

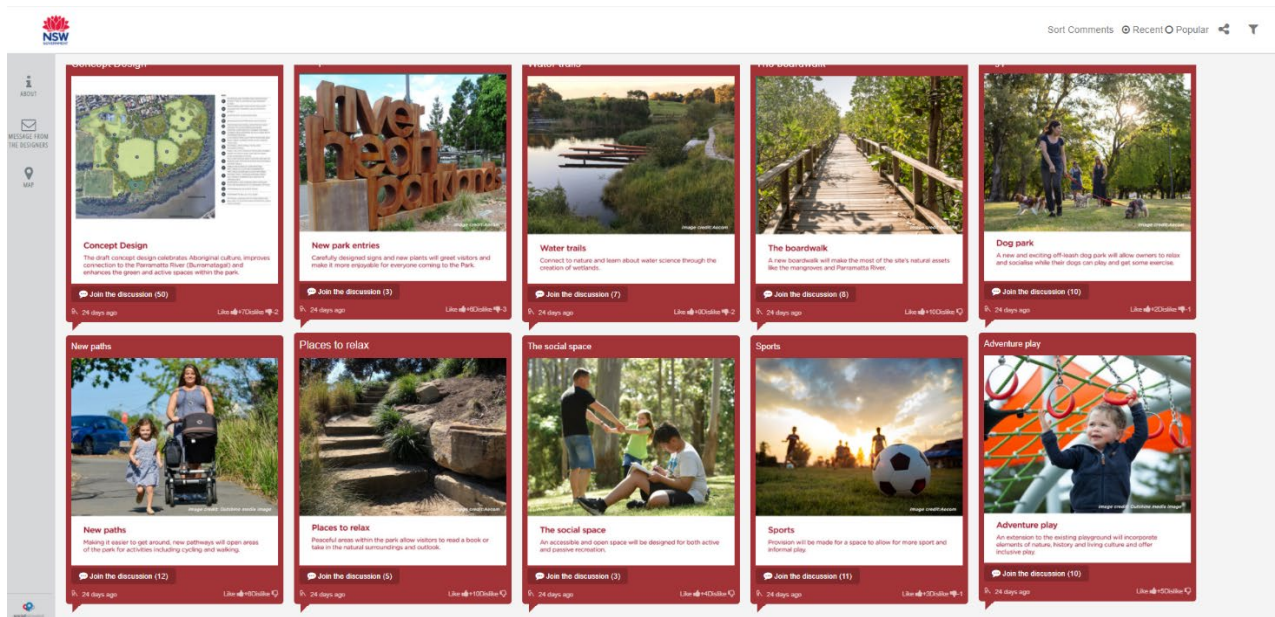


Appendix B – Social Pinpoint Design Board Analysis

Overview

A total of 119 responses were recorded on the Design Board:

- 50 (42%) 'Draft Concept Design' comments
- 12 (10%) 'New paths' comments
- 11 (9%) 'Sports' comments
- 10 (8%) 'Dog park' comments
- 10 (8%) 'Adventure play' comments
- 8 (7%) 'The boardwalk' comments
- 7 (6%) 'Water trails' comments
- 5 (4%) 'Places to relax' comments
- 3 (3%) 'New park entries' comments
- 3 (3%) 'The social space' comments



Overall sentiment

Community members were extremely passionate in their responses on the Design Board. The majority of comments had a neutral to negative sentiment, though few were positive especially concerning the need for water play.

The following word cloud was created using the most common phrases on the Design Board, to convey the community's feedback for the design of the new Park.



Appendix C – Aboriginal Consultation meeting minutes

Parks for People: George Kendall Riverside Park, Ermington

Meeting with Dharug Traditional Owners and Aboriginal community representatives

Details

Purpose: To understand from Dharug Traditional Owners and community representatives the cultural heritage significance and Dharug Cultural values of the George Kendall Riverside Park and to identify potential opportunities for recognising Aboriginal heritage - e.g. through public art and landscape design.

The meeting will help inform the development of a concept plan for an upgrade of the park. The upgrade of the park is part of Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's (DPIE) Parks for People Program.

Date: Thursday 10 December, 11am to 1pm

Location: Zoom

Agenda

1. Acknowledgement of Country
2. Welcome and introductions
3. Project background
4. George Kendall Riverside Park today – about the site
5. Guiding design principles for improvements to the park
6. Workshop Activity/discussion:
 - Understanding the cultural, natural, and/or social significance and of the site and the area to Aboriginal people
 - Identifying opportunities for creating a welcoming park and acknowledging Dharug cultural values - e.g. through public art and landscape design

Notes

Conversations in the group emphasised the integral nature of the natural environment to the continuous culture and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. The group want to see the mangroves, wetlands and natural landscapes of the park restored and protected from overdevelopment and too much use, and suggested that any future improvements or public art takes its starting point in improving the health of the natural environment.

UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL, NATURAL, AND/OR SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

Use of Language

- Language is very important: e.g. "new", "create" does not acknowledge a continuity of culture and connectedness to Country – this *is* an Aboriginal place, *was* an Aboriginal place, and *always will be* an Aboriginal place. There needs to be a focus on reviving and restoring the park; "creating" sounds like starting from scratch
- Ensure writing in the present tense – acknowledging the living continuity of culture and people. Aboriginal people "were" seems to suggest that Aboriginal people no longer exist.
- Show respect to the name of the park! We want to make changes; we want to see Dharug language on the site in order to share cultural values with the broader public.

Landscape

- Restoration of the land very important – Country has been disrupted a lot with the buildings surrounding the site affected flooding and wetlands health (e.g. "new" wetlands are really about returning the land to health).
- Need to respect the flora and fauna and minimise the foot traffic near the mangroves.
- Concern that the identified midden (registered on AHIMS) is too close to the existing track. Need to ensure the area around the midden is cared for properly – Dharug Traditional Owners can provide recommendations on how best to look after the midden site.
- Native vegetation should be prioritised in the landscape design to contribute to enhancing or protecting biodiversity
- Noted that EcoLogical's report identified threatened species; and stressed the importance of mangroves along the Parramatta River. Future design and development should not penetrate into those areas.

Risk of overdevelopment

- Concerns around overdevelopment as it could decrease the appeal of park; sometimes less is a nice thing too.
- The group recognised the need to allow (sustainable) access to the park -but not at the detriment of the natural environment (particularly mangroves)

Public art

- Any artwork should echo/reflect/celebrate the River without being *on* the river.
- Ensure public art is not tokenistic by building interactive and integrated art and gathering places in the park, not monuments to a 'past'; the cultures of the Indigenous peoples are living cultures.
- Make sure public art is focused on themes of reviving, restoring and are natural and sustainable.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING A WELCOMING AND RESPECTFUL PARK

Change the name of the park - this is very important as a show of respect to Aboriginal people

Arts and culture - design opportunities

- Opportunity to celebrate the River through interactive artwork that also can bring people together. This could take the form of interpretive and interactive water features and water related installations that also would offer a sense of respite and cool. Water is calming and especially great for people with sensory difficulties, the Elderly, children and family.
- Enable cultural spaces and outdoor meeting places for cultural dances, yarning circles.
- The art should pay tribute to the natural landscape – the river is the lifeblood for saltwater people; mangrove country, sided by wetlands country; sided by mudflat country. The area is home to unique flora and fauna and any art needs to talk to mangrove country.

Arts and culture - protocols

- Any public art should be created by Dharug designers and follow protocols. It is important that art is from people who can speak for Country and there is a very broad and talented pool of local Dharug artists.
- Dharug artists should be prioritised and given preference. If other artists are to be invited in, then that should be done by way of invitation by Dharug Traditional Owners.
- Advice on any public art works should be sought by established Dharug peak organisations, including Dharug Strategic Management Group, Dharug Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation, Dharug Custodial Aboriginal Corporation. These organisations can advise on how to approach Dharug artists as well as advice on protocols for any commissioning or procurement.
- Advice on language (e.g. naming, signage, interpretative) should also be sought from the above organisations

A park for all

- The park needs to cater for Elders by creating good spaces for Elderly people to find peace; perhaps create reflective spaces down by the river. There should be designated spaces for Elderly to meet up and gather with others - our Elders are often forgotten in planning for parks, but so many are isolated in their homes.
- Universal design is very important to ensure easy access for people living with disabilities.
- More tree planting of correct species will be restoring Country for future generations.

Do's and don'ts

- **Don't** overdevelop, particularly not right on the river or near mangroves
- **Don't** want to create monuments on Country! We don't want to make tokenistic statements
- **Do** have interactive culture – not culture as a 'past concept' – it is a living thing and something people should be able to experience, interact with
- **Do** activate the park through providing for life, social gatherings

- Do make sure that the River stays as natural as possible – this was not a living space for Aboriginal people and should not be overused, though should be celebrated

Appendix C – Submission

25th March 2021

RE: George Kendall Riverside Park, Phase 2 Community Engagement

Dear _____,

The NSW Government's investment of \$15million to improve George Kendall Riverside (GKR) Park is greatly appreciated by the community. Hopefully this was evident by the level of engagement by the community in the first phase of the draft design.

While we've encouraged the 25,000 strong _____ community to provide feedback on the draft design concept via the interactive design board and online survey, we felt it important to directly share with you feedback we've received from the community over the years about GKR Park as well as more recently on the draft design. Incorporated in our feedback below, is our own experience of regularly using and caring for GKR Park, plus playing at over 300 other parks across Western Sydney.

Apart from having spent many hours playing at GKR Park and holding birthday parties there, I've also personally spent a lot of hours over the last nine months caring for the park through organising community litter clean ups. With the help of over 50 local families, we've removed close to 200 Clean Up Australia bags of rubbish, plus an array of tyres, pallets and other large items, that have washed up along the foreshore at GKR Park. We estimate that thanks to our efforts, close to one tonne of rubbish is no longer polluting the foreshore of GKR Park and Parramatta River.

George Kendall Riverside Park has significant potential to provide our growing community with a fantastic, innovative outdoor recreational space for everyone wanting to enjoy time with their family, friends, dog or exercising by the river in this wonderfully large park. Unfortunately though, the draft design has missed the mark on so many of the key things our community has asked DPIE to provide as part of the upgrade.

Here is a summary of the key things we do and don't want to see as part of the upgrade of GKR Park:

Improved pathways connecting facilities across the park, including separated cycle and foot path going east to west (by adding a boardwalk along the river)

Toilet block in the west side of the park

Water playground

More shade around the main areas used in the park, like the main walkway

Fairfield Adventure Park (or ninja warrior) style obstacle and ropes course for people of all ages

All abilities, large dinky/ pump track

District sized inclusive playground with additional multi-use courts

More parking and signage

✗ Skate park

✗ Loop road in the park

We believe this feedback came through clearly during phase 1, and on the whole was reflected in the What We Heard Report. But in phase 2, there is a big gap between what the community has said they want/ what you heard the community wanted and what is being proposed. We truly hope that the disconnect in some cases is more to do with not enough detail being provided, and maybe in others there are site constraints, but then the community needs to be made aware of these. We note that no site report has been made public or any other background reports regarding the upgrade that would allow the community to understand what is and isn't possible at GKR Park, particularly given it used to be a landfill site. Either way, this gap needs to be greatly reduced otherwise the local community will not be supportive of the project.

On top of this, the level of community engagement by DPIE for phase 2 has very small and greatly reduced compared to phase 1.

- It is disappointing that a mix of in-person and online community engagement wasn't provided given the easing of covid restrictions. If it wasn't possible to have in person engagement with the community, a webinar or other online forum should have been provided as well as answering of questions and concerns raised in the 'interactive' design board.
- Very little promotion has taken place on social media inviting the community to comment on the draft design. It actually appears that DPIE has not posted about phase 2 of the GKR Park upgrade on socials, which is surprising given the significant investment and importance for the community, and the promotion that has been done for other Parks for People projects.
- There has been no engagement with the community by the project team via the online portal, despite the community asking a number of questions and seeking clarification and further information throughout the phase 2 community engagement period.

Below is our specific feedback on the draft concept design, using the headings from the What You Told Us section of the phase 1 report.

ACTIVITY AND PLAY: An active place for diverse recreational interests, ages and abilities

Given the size of GKR Park, there are so many innovative and creative ways it could be transformed into an active place for diverse recreational interests, ages and abilities. But putting in a **skate park** is not one of them! And actually, it will make the park less inclusive, welcoming and appealing for people of different ages and abilities.

We very much agree that more 'play' spaces need to be provided to young people. But skate parks do not appeal to all teenagers and very much tend to make it unappealing for a range of other people to use or be near a skate park – as has been evident by the ongoing anti-social behaviour issues at Meadowbank Park. We, and so many other local families with young children, no longer visit Meadowbank Park for this reason.

There are also already four skate parks within an 8km radius of GKR Park – with three of those being within a 4km radius (two of which were only opened in the last year or two)! So if DPIE and City of Parramatta Council are looking to provide park facilities for a range of interests across the area, then there are a lot of better ways to both cater to youth and diverse interests.

On top of this, the tucked away nature of GKR Park, with no main road going by and therefore hidden from public view, makes the location unsuitable for a skate park. Again, even with Meadowbank Park being somewhat visible to the public, Ryde Police are regularly in attendance.

We see the addition of a skate park as tokenistic in meeting diverse recreational interests and ages and providing the community with an active place that is welcoming. Instead, we strongly request that inspiration is taken from Fairfield Adventure Park that has a fantastic, mostly natural material, obstacle and ropes course that appeals to a range of ages and interests. Such a play space would be much more in fitting with the style of GKR Park and what the community wants.

On top of this, a push track for people of all ages and abilities would be very welcome by the community. There are very few safe places for people to learn to, and practice to, ride a bike or scooter and GKR Parks proximity to the very popular River cycleway and large open space makes it a perfect place to have one. This would also go some way to improving the safety of all users of the main path through the park, by diverting young children from riding on the main path and thus reducing the safety risk to themselves from fast riding cyclists and to cyclists from their usually more erratic riding style.

WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE: A welcoming and accessible space for the whole family

The overriding wish of the community around this identified priority is improving safety and comfort in using the currently shared main path, running east to west through the

park. Having a separate cycleway and footpath is fundamental to this.

We understand that separating path may already be planned as part of work City of Parramatta Council is undertaking, but if this is the case, it needs to be indicated/ incorporated into the design.

The next component of this identified priority for the community is about the interconnectedness of the different areas of the park and how you have to wade through long grass in a lot of cases to travel north/ south through the park, which is different for people in wheelchairs and parents with prams. The draft design does though address this through more interconnected paths. Thank you!

The final element is around access to the park in terms of transport and parking. We don't think the proposed loop road addresses this and instead will create more problems and reduce the value and appeal of the park.

And again, the inclusion of a skate park will make the park far less appealing to families with young children and so many teenagers not interested in skating, and only cater to a small demographic of young people.

COOL AND NATURAL: A cool space that celebrates the natural landscape as a place for relaxation and respite

It's great to see so many more trees being proposed to be planted at GKR Park. However, the location of most of the plantings, while providing an overall cooling effect to the park, will not cool the main areas of use nor provide places for relaxation and respite from what we can tell.

Overwhelming the feedback was for more shade along the main path through the park and a water playground, and yet the draft design does not appear to include either of these.

The woodland plant and informal natural trails look promising. But will there also be places for people to sit in those areas? Whether on a bench or lay out a picnic rug?

Improve connections across the park with walking and cycling path

The proposed additional paths going north/south across the park will go a long way to addressing this identified community need. However, if the main east/ west path continues to be shared, then there's still a major outstanding issue that hasn't been addressed.

Also, a key concern raised during phase 1 by the community was around the regular flooding of the current paths through the park and the need for these to be improved. But it is hard to tell from the draft concept design whether this will happen.

A play space for people of all ages and access levels

Mention is made of extending the current playground, however no details are provided. Though while completing the survey, we are asked for what other elements we'd like to see added to the playground.

We are very keen to see an inclusive, all-abilities playground at GKR Park – particularly given the size of the park and fact that the Parramatta LGA only currently has two (at Ollie Webb Reserve and Paperbark Playground in Parramatta Park). But it's unclear at this stage what form this 'extended' playground will take with no details being provided in the draft concept design.

In terms of all ages, both the obstacle course style play space and push track are far better at appealing and engaging people across generations than a skate park.

More tennis and multi courts for people to play

The draft design does not appear to deliver at all on this identified community priority.

More trees to provide shade

While a lot more trees are proposed to be added, it's unclear whether they will actually provide shade for people using the park in that they are not located over the main areas of use.

The inclusion of water and/or a waterplay space

Overwhelmingly the community wants a water play space at GKR Park. We'd like to see where it was said in the phase 1 community feedback that we wanted the 'inclusion of water'. If anything, the feedback was clearly around a greater connection to the river.

The addition of a wetland is nice, but only if it's well maintained and does not become a further breeding ground for mosquitoes which are already such a problem along this stretch of the river.

Very disappointingly, there is no mention of the much-wanted water playground – except again when completing the survey and the question about the extension to the playground. There is such demand for more safe, free places for people of all ages to cool off with the current and projected increase in temperatures throughout the year in Western Sydney. City of Parramatta Council has done research to quantify the high value the community places on water playgrounds and identified that one should be provided to the community in this part of the Parramatta LGA. GKR Park is the ideal candidate for a water playground given its size, facilities and location. Providing this component is one of the best ways the NSW Government can improve the value of GKR Park to the community.

A lookout to appreciate the river view

The draft design does deliver on this community priority with both the hilltop and boardwalk out to the river. But our understanding of what the community really wants to see here is greater connection with the river, mainly by having a pedestrian boardwalk running the length of the park through/ behind the mangroves – not at one point jutting out into the river.

Our litter clean-up site runs for about 400m along an old path that Council has not maintained for years, despite it being listed in the GKR Park Masterplan as to continue to exist. So many of the families who care for GKR Park by removing rubbish from behind the mangroves requested that a path be put through here. But this has been ignored without explanation.

Having a boardwalk that goes east to west, at least for part of the park will also address the issue of separating out the cycle and walk way.

We also hope that the public artwork being commissioned as part of the park upgrade will have a focus on connecting with and appreciating our river. And that the important story of Parramatta River and the ongoing need to care for it will be shared with the community through various elements of the park upgrade. I am sure the Parramatta River Catchment Group would be willing to assist with this.

Outdoor equipment in more convenient locations

This appears to have been ignored in the draft design. Our understanding is that it has more to do with the location of 'play' spaces in relation to amenities and access/ pathways. The pathways part is being addressed. But not including a toilet block at the western end of GKR Park, as part of the upgrade, will actually reduce usability of the park.

Install lights along the paths so people can exercise at all times of the day

It's unclear from the draft design if this will be included in the upgrade.

Better access to toilets

While this has been listed last in the summary of what the community asked for, it was a lot higher priority in phase 1 feedback that was provided via the pinboard. And yet it is only offered as a possible future addition. Given the investment being made to improve recreational usage of the western side of GKR Park, the value will be significantly reduced if there are not toilets for people to use while visiting the park.

The community was clear on what they wanted to see from the upgrade of GKR Park and continue to be through the feedback being provided in phase 2. Please make the necessary changes to the draft design concept to incorporate our priorities and where they can't be addressed, provide information to the community as to why.

I think we can all agree that we want to make sure that the significant investment by the NSW Government into GKR Park provides the greatest possible value to the community now and into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide more detailed feedback.

Appendix D – Submission (summary)

Letter Received

It looks like you've been having great success in increasing and improving access to fun and safe parks across NSW since we last spoke back at the opening of Paperbark Playground at Parramatta Park. It's nice to have you and your team working on another exciting project in the Parramatta area.

I'm writing to provide more detailed feedback on phase 2 of the upgrade of George Kendall Riverside Park, then is possible through the online survey and interactive design board (see attached letter).

George Kendall Riverside (GKR) Park has significant potential to provide our growing community with a fantastic, innovative outdoor recreational space for everyone wanting to enjoy time with their family, friends, dog or exercise by the river in this wonderfully large park.

Unfortunately, though, the draft design has missed the mark on many of the key things the community has asked to be provided as part of the upgrade.

Here is a summary of the key things we do and don't want to see as part of the upgrade of GKR Park:

- ✓ Improved pathways connecting facilities across the park, including separated cycle and foot path going east to west (by adding a boardwalk along the river)
- ✓ Toilet block in the west side of the park
- ✓ Water playground
- ✓ More shade around the main areas used in the park, like the main walkway
- ✓ Fairfield Adventure Park (or ninja warrior) style obstacle and ropes course for people of all ages
- ✓ All abilities, large dinky/ pump track
- ✓ District sized inclusive playground with additional multi-use courts
- ✓ More parking and signage
- ✗ Skate park
- ✗ Loop road in the park

I'd also like to highlight the community's disappointment with the level of community engagement by DPIE for phase 2, which has been small and greatly reduced compared to phase 1. We would have liked to have been offered a mix of in-person and online community engagement, given the easing of covid restrictions. And if it wasn't possible to have in-person engagement, then a webinar or other online forum should have been provided as well as answering questions and concerns raised in the 'interactive' design board. Plus, very little promotion has taken place inviting the community to comment on the draft design. It actually appears that DPIE has not posted about phase 2 of the GKR Park upgrade on socials, which is surprising given the significant investment and importance for the community, and the promotion that has been done for other Parks for People projects as well as phase 1.

I'm sure we can all agree that we want to make sure the significant and important investment by the NSW Government into GKR Park provides the greatest possible value to the community now and into the future.
I appreciate your time in considering our feedback.

Appendix E – Submission

18 March 2021

RE: Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's – George Kendall Riverside Park Concept Plan

As previously advised, the Northern District Cricket Association (NDCA) is witnessing significant growth in junior cricket participation, particularly from the 10 to 16-year age groups. _____ is supportive of the concept plan's additional cricket field at the Park which will address current and future NDCA demand.

To ensure the provision of essential on and off-field infrastructure meets NDCA and the broader Parramatta cricket community needs, the following recommendations remain desirable and should still be considered concept plan:

- A minimum three to five-lane synthetic cricket practice facility. An ideal location might be where the 'optional location of future amenities building to support new sportsfield and youth space' has been earmarked. This would have the least amount of impact on both cricket and soccer playing fields.
- A 'Regional/Premier' Tier 3 or 4 facility (see Attachment A – Table 2). As a result, the Parramatta LGA would have a third turf playing facility specifically for player pathway development.
- A dual turf-synthetic pitch arrangement which could optimise ground usage for both turf competitions and junior matches, provides a greater return on investment for Council, promotes greater connectivity between junior and senior cricket and strengthens the player development pathway.
- The inclusion of junior format crease markings/identifiers within the playing pitch and training net design to support the junior cricket pathway from Woolworths Cricket Blast into Junior Cricket.

When considering the design requirements for the above, please refer to [Cricket Australia's Community Cricket Facility Guidelines](#).

As previously shared with Council, the CNSW Facilities Hierarchy and Investment Framework ('Attachment A') provides a guide for the provision of cricket on and off-field infrastructure at each level of the hierarchy. We hope that you might find this useful for determining the level of cricket and infrastructure required for the eastern side of the Park.

We look forward to collaborating with Council to support the development and growth in our sport. We understand that Council will continue to consult with CNSW and local cricket during the process.

Attachment A – CNSW Facilities Hierarchy & Investment Framework

Table 1 - Facilities Hierarchy

CA Hierarchy Level		CNSW Hierarchy Level	Desired Level of Competition	NSW Facility Examples	
International	➔	National	Men's Intl., BBL	SCG, Sydney Showgrounds Stadium	
Domestic/First Class	➔	State	Women's Intl., WBBL, Tour Matches, Domestic One-Day, Sheffield Shield	North Sydney Oval, Drummoyne Oval, C.eX Coffs International Stadium	
Regional/Premier	➔	Regional – Tier 1-2	Underage Intl., WNCL, Futures League, Underage Nationals	North Dalton Park, Bankstown Oval, Lavington Sports Ground	
	➔	Regional – Tier 3-4	Premier Cricket	Manly Oval, Glenn McGrath Oval	
Club (Home)	➔	Community	Club (Home)	Community Cricket	Over 1,500 facilities in NSW
			Club (Satellite)	Community Cricket	
			School (Shared)	Community Cricket	
			School (Restricted)	Community Cricket	
Club (Satellite)	➔	NEW	Informal	Cricket Blast	Green open spaces with no permanent cricket infrastructure
			NEW	Indoor	Indoor Cricket Competitions

Table 2 – Infrastructure Provision Framework

CNSW Hierarchy		Tier 4 (Low)	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1 (High)
National		As per ICC Requirements			
State		As per CA Requirements			
Regional		<input type="checkbox"/> Turf pitches (min. six (6)) <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor turf training nets <input type="checkbox"/> Curators storage <input type="checkbox"/> Office/administration space	<input type="checkbox"/> Training standard lighting <input type="checkbox"/> First aid/medical room <input type="checkbox"/> Sight screens	<input type="checkbox"/> Turf pitches (min. eight (8)) <input type="checkbox"/> Umpires' room <input type="checkbox"/> Access to two (2) satellite turf grounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Match standard lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic scoreboard <input type="checkbox"/> Gym/fitness room <input type="checkbox"/> Access to three (3) or more satellite turf grounds
Community	Club (Home)	<input type="checkbox"/> Shade and shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Green open space	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to drinking water <input type="checkbox"/> Access to toilets <input type="checkbox"/> CA compliant synthetic pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lockable external equipment storage <input type="checkbox"/> Changerooms (min. two (2) per pitch) <input type="checkbox"/> Practice nets (min. three (3) lanes) <input type="checkbox"/> Manual scoreboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice nets (min. five (5) lanes) <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen/kiosk <input type="checkbox"/> Pavilion/Clubroom <input type="checkbox"/> Match standard lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Ground fencing
	Club (Satellite)	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent pitch; OR <input type="checkbox"/> Portable cricket pitch			
	School (Shared)	<input type="checkbox"/> Green open space <input type="checkbox"/> Portable cricket pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> Green open space <input type="checkbox"/> Shade and shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Access to toilets (Shared only)	<input type="checkbox"/> CA compliant synthetic pitch <input type="checkbox"/> Practice nets (min. two (2) lanes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Turf pitches (min. five (5)) <input type="checkbox"/> Pavilion <input type="checkbox"/> Changerooms (min. two (2))
	School (Restricted)				
Informal		<input type="checkbox"/> Green open space	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to toilets	<input type="checkbox"/> Portable cricket pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> Shade and shelter
Indoor		<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-sport indoor facility	<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated indoor cricket	<input type="checkbox"/> National standard	<input type="checkbox"/> International standard

In order for a facility to be classified at a given tier, it must meet all provision requirements of this tier, plus all the requirements of lower tiers.

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